

Khalid to join Anwar tonight for show of solidarity in Kajang
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OLEH SHERIDAN MAHAVERA

Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim is expected to take the stage tonight in Kajang to help his party boss Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim explain to voters why they are putting them through another election.

Besides explaining the rationale behind the much-criticised by-election, PKR hopes to put forth a solid front to the public by pairing the opposition leader with the popular Khalid.

This is to refute claims that the Kajang by-election, which was triggered by the January 27 resignation of Lim Chin Cheh of PKR, was an internal plot to oust the Selangor menteri besar.

Khalid is expected to take the stage to speak with Anwar at the launch of the party's by-election machinery at the Taman Mesra Kajang community hall at 9pm.

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli said yesterday Khalid's presence would be an endorsement of the whole plan of making Anwar a state lawmaker through the by-election.

"Of course, when we first thought of the plan, there was not much buy-in from those affected by it. But after discussing it in-depth, all the parties involved, including Khalid saw the need for it," Rafizi said.

Rafizi, who is also Pandan MP, Anwar and Khalid will attend programmes together throughout the by-election campaign.

Claims of a plot to replace Khalid with Anwar were fuelled by past instances in which the former repeatedly clashed with Anwar and Selangor PKR chief Azmin Ali on Selangor policies after last year's 13th general election.

In a January 30 interview, Rafizi denied this, saying that Anwar would reinforce Khalid in Selangor by providing political muscle to Khalid's managerial brilliance.

The plan is for the two to work together in the Selangor government after the by-election, either with Khalid as menteri besar and Anwar as exco, or vice-versa.

Anwar, Rafizi said, needed local "political legitimacy" to help Selangor deal with aggressive political attacks from what he described would be a resurgent Selangor Umno who wanted to incite ethnic tensions in Selangor.

Although PKR has downplayed the issue, Rafizi admitted that the plan would also stop the squabbling between Azmin and Khalid.

Azmin is also slated to speak at tonight's event by virtue of his role as by-election director.

Although Pakatan Rakyat allies PAS and DAP have pledged to support PKR in the by-election, local grassroots activists are still finding it difficult to wrap their heads around the scheme, much less explain it to voters.

“We are still surprised at the events of the last few days,” said one Selangor Pakatan Rakyat grassroots activist who requested anonymity, adding that party members were also hoping for a thorough explanation from Anwar.

Rafizi said there was still much negativity surrounding the plan.

“There won’t be much Barisan Nasional-bashing tomorrow. The speakers will concentrate on explaining this move.

“I think voters need to hear this directly from him (Anwar). We have been telling the truth all along but unfortunately, the Malaysian public is often fuelled by political intrigue.

“So it’s better they get it straight from him.” – February 3, 2014.

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