

Anwar's role to help Selangor MB, but options remain, says Rafizi
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If he wins the Kajang by-election, PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's role in the Selangor government is to assist and not to replace Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, says party strategist Rafizi Ramli.

The party's strategy director and a key architect of the controversial "Kajang move" said Anwar would provide Khalid with the political muscle to defend the state government against what PKR believes would be heightened political attacks from an increasingly extremist Umno.

"Anwar can be MB (menteri besar), Khalid can be adviser, Anwar can be MB, Khalid can be exco, Khalid can be MB, Anwar can be exco. The permutation is endless.

"But the combination of a political maestro and the management expertise of the Pakatan government now is necessary to the political escalation that will happen," Rafizi said in an interview with The Malaysian Insider.

PKR believes that rival Malay-based party Umno is becoming increasingly aggressive in fanning ethnic tensions, such as its "Kalimah Allah" roadshow, in an effort to destabilise the Selangor Pakatan Rakyat government.

At the same time, Rafizi admitted that Anwar's presence in the Selangor government was to resolve a feud between Azmin Ali, who leads Selangor PKR, and Khalid.

However, Rafizi stressed that resolving the animosity between the two, which have seen them clash publicly on a variety of issues, was of "secondary" importance.

"If it was purely a question of (resolving) the Khalid and Azmin feud so to speak, then why did we not do it in the past two to three years?

"The feud has always been there. It's not just because of the feud. It is a secondary thing.

"We want to fortify Selangor. We want to make it a model state and we want to have the option to respond to Barisan Nasional as best as possible," said Rafizi, who is also Pandan MP.

Anwar will be contesting the Kajang state assembly seat after it was vacated voluntarily by incumbent Lee Chin Cheh, in a move that was widely criticised by civil society groups.

PKR has revealed that Lee's resignation was so that Anwar could contest the seat and, subsequently, become an ADUN or member of the Selangor legislature.

The party has defended the plot in the face of widespread anger that the by-election was a waste of public funds, saying that it was a "tactical move" to fortify Selangor and make it a base for Pakatan Rakyat to take over Putrajaya.

PKR had also been accused of using the by-election to deal with the rivalry between Khalid and Azmin.

In an interview yesterday, Rafizi also defended the plan as necessary to deepen Pakatan support in Selangor as residents become more demanding of the state government.

“During our first term, we were a new government and people gave us the benefit of the doubt. But in our second term, they will want us to solve their problems.

“We cannot constantly be defensive and operate in a state of siege and play the sympathy card.”
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