

PAS finally agrees to Khalid's removal, but undecided on new Selangor MB
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After a series of high-level and intense meetings with its Pakatan Rakyat (PR) partners, PAS has agreed to the removal of Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim as Selangor menteri besar, say sources.

But no consensus has yet been reached among PAS, DAP and PKR whether the new menteri besar candidate should be PKR president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail or her deputy, Azmin Ali.

A senior PAS leader said the Islamist party had also agreed not to stake a claim to the post for itself although PAS and DAP each hold 15 seats in the state assembly against PKR's 14.

It was reported that following pressure from its PR allies, PKR is giving Khalid the boot after Hari Raya Aidilfitri and party sources said opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has picked his wife to fill the post.

Dr Wan Azizah, who is Kajang assemblyman, will be the "stabiliser" for PKR which has been dogged by controversies, including its troubled party elections.

The PAS leader, who did not want to be identified, also said several PAS leaders disagreed that Dr Wan Azizah be appointed as the next menteri besar with the excuse that Islam did not encourage women to be in leaders.

However, there were also disagreements among some PAS leaders over Azmin's suitability as menteri besar.

The Malaysian Insider had previously reported that PR would take some time to resolve the Selangor menteri besar crisis as the biggest stumbling block to the

move was PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

From the start, Hadi had opposed the "Kajang move" – orchestrated to remove Khalid and install Anwar as menteri besar – but the plan was scuttled after the Court of Appeal found him guilty of sodomising his former aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, making the PKR leader ineligible to contest the Kajang by-election.

Dr Wan Azizah ran instead and won the seat.

Last Monday, PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali said Khalid's fate would be decided by the Pakatan council, which is expected to meet before Hari Raya.

"Maybe we will meet before Raya. We have not convened a meeting for a long time. Issues to be discussed might include the menteri besar," he was quoted as saying.

Anwar said on Saturday that Khalid's successor had been decided but declined to reveal the person's identity.

"We are not naming anyone yet. There has to be a consensus among PR members," he said in Penang.

Two-term Menteri Besar Khalid had often been accused by his detractors of running the state unilaterally without consulting his party PKR as well as the national PR leadership.

Khalid had also been widely criticised for his handling of issues in Selangor, such as water rationing, the Selangor Islamic Religious Department's seizure of Malay and Iban Bibles as well as his push for the Kinrara Damansara Expressway (Kidex), which had upset some PR leaders as it was seen as going against the pact's election manifesto to abolish tolled highways.

While it was understood that PKR and DAP leaders are agreeable to replace Khalid,

Selangor PAS has not made a decision on Khalid's position and will unlikely do so without the go-ahead from the national leadership.

Khalid has had to consistently fend off rumours of him relinquishing his post, insisting that he wants to serve out his full term.

Despite PR's growing unhappiness with Khalid, a recent survey by Merdeka Center found that Selangor electorate was happy with his stewardship of the state.

The survey which was conducted from May 16 to July 6 found that 54% of the 6,436 respondents agreed that the state was on the right track, as opposed to 25% who felt otherwise. – July 21, 2014.

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