

As rumours swirl, cops open another file on Anwar
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COMMENT It seemed like a page from Kafka, that connoisseur of dread from sources mysterious, sinister and baffling.

Anwar Ibrahim, opposition leader and - to several quarters where preparations for the 13th general election are in high readiness - prime minister-in-waiting, was yesterday notified by the police that they want to talk to him.

All of yesterday, rumours swirled of Parliament's probable dissolution today, this being the numerically auspicious 11-11-11 day - a millennium's rarity.

Incidentally, the number 11 is bruited about as having the properties of a lucky charm to Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Numbers hold no significance, incantatory or totemic, to Anwar except of course - 112 - which is the total of seats the coalition he leads in Parliament will have to garner for him to present himself to the king as Malaysia's 7th PM since independence.

Seven, of course, is a portentous number in some religious traditions (there is no need to go into the reasons why it is so - this is religiously-sensitive nation, we have always to bear in mind).

In one sense in which 7 is a significant number - it connotes completion of task - it is resonant for the task connected with Anwar - bringing the now 13-year popular agitation for the country's democratic restoration to fulfillment.

Another gauntlet for Anwar to run

Thus yesterday's notice from the police that they want to talk to him is seen as yet another jagged edge in the gauntlet Anwar has had to run since 1998, seminal year of Malaysian political consciousness raising.

The police, like the mysterious antagonists in Kafka's tales, did not proffer information other than their intent to talk to Anwar.

"They didn't say why they wanted to speak to him but it seems it's in connection with some police reports that were lodged," was all that was offered by PKR vice-president and legal eagle N Surendran (right) when contacted by Malaysiakini.

What was the subject of the police reports lodged, presumably against Anwar?

"Don't know," was Surendran's terse reply.

Like some feral creature primed for counter measures upon sensing danger lurking in the near distance, a press advisory went out from PKR headquarters within hours of the police notice to Anwar, saying that a press conference would be held later this morning.

The press advisory had no qualms about what the motive behind the police summons to Anwar was: intimidation.

PKR's resident legal eagles, R Sivarasa and Surendran, will address the press. They are certain to be cogent on the impropriety of the police summons and caustic in their inferences on the schemes behind it.

Sinister force at work

To the morally fortified lacking in the buffers against state power, moral condemnation is the only weapon they have against the malign and capricious use of state power.

The more lacerating the rhetoric, the more cathartic the release from a Kafkaesque sense of a sinister force at work behind the scenes.

Malaysians have heard no less than the PM himself say several months ago that defeat for Umno-BN is unimaginable in the 13th GE.

In a democracy, even a flawed one, that is akin to saying that your vote does not count if the election does not result in the incumbent's extension of tenure.

Few comments so starkly expose the folly of allowing a 54-year incumbency to last so long it warps the occupant's hold on reality. That police summons to Anwar is indicative that the fragility of that grasp is not limited to selected quarters.

It is not necessary to rely on Lord Acton to recognise that power that is not transferred from one coalition to its competitor - as distinct from being slightly shuffled among its existing holders - is power that will be abused.

Given the dire portents, the 13th GE looms as the country's make-or-break event of the post-independence era.

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