

**'Interim PM' while I'm in jail, says Anwar**

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EXCLUSIVE Pakatan Rakyat will appoint an interim prime minister in the event the opposition coalition comes to power while its leader Anwar Ibrahim is behind bars.

Speaking to Malaysiakini in an interview days before his sodomy trial verdict is delivered, the PKR de facto leader made it clear that he would assume prime ministership once he is out of prison.

anwar ibrahim in seremban 2 "We did discuss this among the Pakatan leadership (in the event of his imprisonment).

"But is that a real problem? No. Because if we win, there is going to be an interim PM.

"Of course, I'm keen that once we win, I shouldn't be in prison for far too long," Anwar said during the interview at his office in Tropicana, Petaling Jaya, yesterday.

He added that such a scenario had taken place in countries like Turkey where the AK Party had in 2002 won power while its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was in prison.

"This interim thing (prime ministership) is easy... However, when I asked (then Turkish interim PM) Abdullah Gül how it was, he said, 'Huh! You think it was easy? That boss of mine expected me to brief him everyday, in prison,' he quipped.

Four months later, Gül secured legislation allowing Erdogan's return to politics, and the party leader took over as PM. Gül was subsequently appointed deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

anwar ibrahim hadi awang nik aziz meeting 230908 Late yesterday, PAS central committee member Hasan Ali said that if Anwar is convicted, PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat or PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang should be the first Pakatan prime minister.

Anwar had in the interview conceded that the selection of the interim prime minister would be a thorny issue, despite the fact that the person would merely be a seat warmer.

"It can be contentious as the next senior Malay leader is Hadi. Can there be a consensus? We did discuss all these options," he said.

Anwar assures peaceful gathering

On a separate matter, the opposition leader said he could guarantee that those attending the gathering at the Kuala Lumpur court complex when the verdict is delivered on Monday "will not be armed".

"The guarantee (of peace) should come from the Home Ministry. What guarantee do (I) give? Nobody will be armed."

He added that the gathering would be a "show of solidarity", not a "protest" by supporters.

NONE "No, (the supporters) want to show solidarity. They know the court system. I don't think they expect a just decision but they are of course curious to find out, hear and observe the decision," he said.

He noted that the PKR Youth wing has appointed "guards" among them and would work with the PAS Unit Amal (security unit) to ensure peace.

"I personally believe it will be peaceful, but if it is a concern to everybody, as it is also ours, we will take additional measures," Anwar said.

He also commended the Home Ministry's decision to negotiate the terms of the gathering.

PKR deputy president Azmin Ali is scheduled to meet with Kuala Lumpur police chief Mohamad Salleh at 11am today to discuss the logistics of the gathering dubbed '901 Free Anwar'.

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