

My work is not done yet, says Anwar

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By Ram Anand

INTERVIEW PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has said that he is not contemplating retirement from politics yet, as he believes that his work "is not done" in the Malaysian political arena after Pakatan Rakyat's defeat in yesterday's disputed polls.

NONEAnwar (right), who has said that he does not accept the Election Commission's (EC) results for the general election, where Pakatan managed to win 89 parliamentary seats but fell short of forming the federal government, said that he will need to "settle all the issues" regarding the polls results before evaluating his options.

He had previously said that he would consider retiring to a teaching job in Europe if Pakatan fails to attain power this elections.

"These elections have been stolen from us by Umno-BN. As far as I am concerned, we have won this election," he told Malaysiakini during an interview at PKR headquarters today.

Anwar said that he and the other coalition party leaders from DAP and PAS will decide on the next course of action, which will probably involve petitions to the court to re-look into the results of some disputed seats.

NONE"I have said that the issue of legitimacy (of the elections) is in question. There is evidence of clear fraud. There are constituencies where we have a case. We will not accept the results of these seats- about 30 to 40 of them. We are working on it," said Anwar.

Dressed in a dappled black shirt and a black coat, Anwar appeared mellow and slightly downbeat, and even admitted that he and his family did enjoy his time teaching in the US.

"When I was teaching in the US, those were the best times for me, Wan Azizah (Wan Ismail, his wife) and the family," he said.

NONEAnwar noted that he was confident that he was robbed of winning this election because of the groundswell momentum that he had observed during the

last leg of his campaign.

"I know about the sentiments, because I have been campaigning my whole life," he said, rolling his eyes.

"It saddens me (the result). I can still visualise the frustration that the people had during my ceramah nationwide," he added.

During the closing days of campaigning, Pakatan ceramahs nationwide drew in bumper crowds ranging from 20,000 to 100,000 participants almost on a daily basis.

Postal votes don't reflect groundswell sentiments

He also said that apart from allegations about phantom and foreign voters along with reports of controversial final counts which favoured BN, early votes and postal votes did not reflect the groundswell sentiments.

"Early votes and postal votes - are you telling me that Pakatan only got 12 percent of these votes? Are the army and police cut off from the rest of Malaysia? They don't have relatives that they communicate with?" he asked.

He, however, appeared to be slightly sceptical about getting any form of response from the EC regarding the alleged discrepancies in the polling process.

NONE"Of course they (EC) never took us seriously. They are unrepentant and are in a state of denial. They must be stupid to say that the indelible ink can't be washed off when thousands of people complained about the same thing," he further added.

"But we have not tried yet, we will give them a chance to respond to us," he added, before saying that his party "cannot accept the process".

"It has become so pervasive, the extent of fraud, that this is maybe the worst-conducted elections we ever had."

Anwar, 65, was stripped of his deputy prime minister's post and subsequently jailed for corruption in 1998 in a highly publicised rift with then-premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He spent six years in jail prior to his release in 2004, and also formed Parti Keadilan Nasional, which later became Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR)

NONEThis election was the first time he had led an opposition pact heading into the polls- his wife Wan Azizah was still the opposition leader during the 2008 elections because Anwar was still banned from contesting.

Going by results alone, this is still the best ever performance for an opposition pact in the country's history - with 89 parliamentary seats obtained.

Pakatan have won seven more seats than the 82 it won in 2008, and also won the popular vote nationwide at about 51 percent.

However, Anwar might be pushing 70 by the time Malaysia heads into the 14th general election, and it remains to be seen if a man who has made an unlikely comeback in politics would be able to muster one last push to unseat BN, and assume the prime minister's post.

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