

## **Anwar in prison, death knell for Pakatan?**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Oct 15, 2014**

In the aftermath of the Selangor menteri besar crisis, which left the opposition coalition on the brink of collapse, DAP's grandmaster Lim Kit Siang had called for the top leaders to meet in an attempt to bridge the chasms.

However, there has been no news of such a meeting. Perhaps it was done under the media radar, but even if it was, information would surely have leaked out.

Even before the dust could settle on the Selangor imbroglio, Pakatan Rakyat parties were once again at loggerheads over the Oktoberfest beer festival.

And now with Anwar Ibrahim's final appeal with regard to his sodomy conviction slated before the Federal Court on Oct 28 and 29, the burning question is whether Pakatan would survive if the opposition leader is sent to prison.

Prior to Anwar spearheading the opposition bloc, the notion that DAP and PAS, with their diametrically opposed ideologies, being partners in a coalition would have been dismissed as a political fairy tale.

But Anwar achieved the impossible.

And despite the glaring differences, he managed to keep the two parties on the same vessel, thus giving hope to opposition supporters that Pakatan is truly a viable option to replace BN.

In his absence, it is difficult to imagine any other leader in the Pakatan framework being able to fill his shoes and keep the coalition intact.

In 2001, when Anwar was serving his prison sentence on his first sodomy conviction, DAP had quit the then Barisan Alternatif after locking horns with PAS.

Umno's strategy for Pakatan implosion

Perhaps Anwar's political rivals also sense this.

There is no point in waging a battle against Pakatan as a whole. The most effective strategy would be to chop off the head vis-a-vis incarcerate Anwar.

And perhaps this is the reason behind Anwar's case being expedited.

By removing him, BN is banking on Pakatan imploding due to the irreconcilable differences

between PAS and DAP.

In its attempt to pry open the opposition, Umno has already launched a campaign to constantly remind PAS that it is being shoved about in Pakatan.

Umno websites are replete with articles of party leaders accusing PAS of deviating from its struggle.

Even former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad (right) jumped on the bandwagon, recalling how PAS had once condemned Umno for working with non-Muslims but was now doing the same.

He also warned that PAS was treading a perilous path by forging political cooperation with a powerful non-Muslim entity, DAP.

Lest we forget, there are also some powerful factions in PAS, especially among the conservative circles, who believe that the Islamic party must join hands with Umno to safeguard Islam and the position of Malays.

On the other hand, Anwar's incarceration could become a rallying point to unite the fractious opposition parties and consolidate their union.

Hence locking up Anwar might backfire on Umno.

There are some who believe that he is more dangerous behind bars, heralded as a symbol by his supporters for the struggle against oppression and tyranny.

It remains to be seen whether the hope and aspiration of the 52 percent of Malaysians who voted for Pakatan in the last general election would be crushed by the gavel of the apex court.