

Pakatan will survive my jailing, says Anwar
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim says one need not worry about Pakatan Rakyat breaking up should he go to jail in the Sodomy II decision come Feb 10.

He also called on Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali to be "courageous and break the barriers" to effect change for the better.

Anwar was reported saying this in an exclusive interview, which is the focus story in the latest issue of the DAP mouthpiece The Rocket.

"Nobody wants to go to jail. I don't want to go to jail... but some say Anwar inside is a problem, Anwar outside is also a problem, but I view it positively after all.

"People tend to forget that I was already in jail when Pakatan emerged, of course not with the name Pakatan Rakyat, but this broad concept of a coalition. So this isn't something new," said Anwar, who is also the Permatang Pauh MP.

"Some say my entry to jail may even fortify and strengthen Pakatan, because there will be a rallying point. So I always view it in the positive.

"I am optimistic. I feel there is still hope for change in my lifetime.

"There is a crack in our country, this racial and religious strife is a huge problem, and if we do not change this now, it will be a backward trend.

"People accuse politicians for politicising these issues, but they are beyond partisan politics.

"This is the safety of our nation; because we have never seen this before, and I've been in politics for a long time.

"If you allow this unchecked there is no turning back, it will lead to an explosion.

"We (see it) as our duty to save the nation," he told The Rocket in the interview published in Chinese and English.

'Azmin must be bold, direct'

He was also asked if a tattered Pakatan, in view of a splintered PAS as well as the public PAS-DAP bickering, would be able to withstand his absence.

"Is Pakatan strong enough to do that? Yes we have to (be). We are gaining, and that's why I

think it is important to maintain the cordial relationship among the parties," he said.

In a message to the Selangor menteri besar in the same interview, Anwar said Azmin must "go beyond relying on religious authorities or PAS" to enter the rural Muslim base.

"I think you have to accept in the political process there always is the same principle: those who support BN, not all are agreeable to BN, but they fear change.

"Then, there are those who vote Pakatan because they want change, but may not be as supportive of Pakatan overall.

"It is then for us to articulate our vision and present our agenda, that is, the policy framework we have agreed upon.

"There is no party, not even BN, that has presented that sort of detailed account, but it is important that with our limitation of access to the mainstream media that we go and break those barriers.

"That is my advice to the current MB, to be courageous and break the barriers, enter the rural Muslim base, go beyond relying on religious authorities or PAS.

"It should be a Pakatan agenda to be bold and deal with the issues directly," he told The Rocket, which is sold at selected newsstands.