

## **Anwar still the opposition leader, says Guan Eng**

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**By Susan Loone**

DAP is solidly behind jailed opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, and as far as the party is concerned, the latter is still the head of Pakatan Rakyat.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng emphasised that Anwar is still the opposition leader and Permatang Pauh MP until he is asked to officially vacate his seat.

Lim read out Article 48 (1) of the federal constitution that states the conditions under which an MP would be disqualified; henceforth, Anwar would lose his opposition leader post and Permatang Pauh seat.

Anwar failed in his appeal to overturn the Court of Appeal decision to convict him for sodomy and sentence him to five years' jail.

"In 14 days, Anwar will lose his seat unless he asks for pardon from the Agong," Lim said at a press conference in Komtar today.

"So, we must wait until the Agong accepts or rejects his petition.

"It depends on whether Anwar wants to seek a pardon from the Agong," added Lim, who is also the Penang chief minister.

Lim said he has discussed the possibility of Anwar seeking a pardon from the man himself, but declined to divulge the contents of the discussion.

He also dismissed speculations that DAP was eyeing the opposition leader's post, asking speculators to check directly with him - the party leader - for truth to such allegations.

He was told that PAS is expected to discuss the opposition leader post today, but commented that "I can only speak for DAP".

Asked on whether DAP was prepared for the impending Permatang Pauh by-election, Lim noted that he would entertain the matter after the seat is officially vacant.

"We are prepared to face all these challenges with Anwar," Lim quipped.

### **Anwar out in 2018, at the earliest**

Anwar, 67, is expected to be out of prison in June 2018 at the earliest for good behaviour, failing which he will only be released in 2020.

It is widely believed that Anwar's political career has been decimated, as he would be

subsequently barred from active politics for five years until 2023.

Anwar has maintained his innocence and vowed never to surrender his struggle to bring reforms to Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Lim expressed sympathy towards Anwar's wife - and PKR president - Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and her children, who must face Anwar's incarceration for sodomy charges for the second time.

The party secretary-general pledged that DAP will stand firmly with Anwar through all his trials and tribulations.

Lim stressed that despite his jail sentence for sodomy, Anwar's name will continue to be respected in Penang due to his leadership qualities.

"Penangites will remember him. The state government and Pakatan will not forget him. We will wait until he is free," said Lim, who is also the Bagan MP.

He announced that there will be two nightly gatherings to honour Anwar - the first on Saturday at the Tapak Expo in Seberang Jaya, and another on Monday at the Han Chiang University College on the island.

Lim said DAP will continue Anwar's struggles and is aware that the situation for Pakatan is more challenging these days.

"However, no one can predict the future as no one had predicted that Anwar will be jailed," he replied, when asked about the future of Pakatan.

"This is the time to test whether Pakatan will stick together," he added, when asked to comment over claims that Anwar is the "glue" who has held the allies of DAP, PAS and PKR together.

In a report by Malaysiakini yesterday, DAP had expressed its wishes for party supremo Lim Kit Siang to assume the opposition leader post, but that it would concede if Wan Azizah were to contest and win the Permatang Pauh seat.

It is noted that the Pakatan leadership council will be meeting again in Kuala Lumpur this Friday to discuss Pakatan's direction.