

Anwar: I'm not in the fight to be PM
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Parti Keadilan Rakyat advisor Anwar Ibrahim said the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition was increasingly perturbed by signs that the "electoral ground is sifting from under their feet."

Anwar said tell-tale signs of BN's distress were discerned from increasing incidence of the use of force by their supporters and resort to pre-emptive legal action by their principals.

The PKR luminary was referring to the roughing up of their Ijok candidate, Khalid Ibrahim, on Saturday by persons wearing BN insignia and the notice of court action taken by Sarawak Chief Minister Taib Mahmud against website malaysiakini last week.

The news portal had carried reports on corruption in logging operations in the east Malaysian state and this had apparently incurred Taib's ire.

In remarks made to malaysiakini today, Anwar linked the two seemingly disparate incidents as belonging in a pattern suggesting inability by the BN in dealing with mounting public clamour for a "new paradigm of politics and national development" in Malaysia.

"The BN is banking that society's vast inertia and small margin for change would see the long running status quo maintained indefinitely," he opined.

"They are wrong. The people are increasingly aware of the need for change. That is why PKR is responding creatively to this need for change by calling for a new paradigm of politics and national development," asserted Anwar.

Social, economy distress

He said the people were increasingly aware that "power which is never transferred from one political party to another – as distinct from being slightly shuffled among its existing holders – is power that will be abused."

"The people are stirring against this abuse," claimed Anwar.

He said the fact that the BN's majority was narrowed in the recent Machap by-election and the possibility of a close contest in Ijok were signs that the BN's "tired, old, formula of racially stratified development and politics" was losing traction among voters.

"The loss of traction is mirrored in the increasingly fanciful rhetorical flights of BN leaders. Prime Minister Abdullah is talking about looking beyond Vision 2020 to the next century.

"Here we are, with so many indices pointing to social and economic distress, and the BN talks like as if it inhabits another stratosphere," he said.

"Talk about losing traction – need I say more," shrugged Anwar.

Mahathir in wonderland

He was asked about his nemesis Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent reiteration of his chances of becoming prime minister as a "pipe dream".

Mahathir said at a Perdana Leadership Discourse session on April 19 that at the most PKR could win a few more seats.

Anwar responded by quoting Lord Melbourne's epigrammatic putdown of the historian Thomas Macaulay in 19th century British Whig politics: "I wish I (Anwar) were certain of something as that man (Mahathir) is of everything."

"I'm not in a fight to become prime minister. I believe I'm in a movement for change – change to conditions partly spawned by Mahathir's misadventures," he added.

"These days Mahathir has become a revisionist historian. He says in his time he allowed more freedom of dissent within Umno, more freedom of press to Malaysian media, more freedom of this and that.

"I find it amusing he says I'm in a dream about the future when it's clear to me he in a wonderland about the past," chuckled Anwar.

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