

Polls setbacks no big deal, says Anwar
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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim today vowed that the party will improve the party's direct elections system and assured party members that vanquished leaders will not retreat from the party struggle.

pkrcongress 281110 anwar ibrahimIn his winding up speech at the party's seventh national congress in Petaling Jaya, Anwar said that the party will be discussing ways to ensure that new roles are prescribed to seasoned leaders who lost, or did not contest, in the recently concluded polls.

Anwar made special mention of the party's three ex-vice presidents - R Sivarasa, Mustaffa Kamil Ayub and Dr Lee Boon Chye (who abstained from the contest) - along with two former supreme council members - Dr Xavier Jayakumar and N Gobalakrishnan - by saying that they were still "steady" and committed to the party's cause.

"Everyone has a role to play," said Anwar.

pkrcongress 281110 mustaffa kamil ayubOn Mustaffa (left), a candidate for the deputy presidency, Anwar noted that he had a good track record as a leader who had organised many activities for the party successfully, so his talents must be tapped by the new leadership.

In an apparent reference to the fact that no candidate from indigenous groups of Sabah and Sarawak were elected into the new line up, Anwar said that they would be co-opted soon.

"To the delegates from Sabah and Sarawak, don't worry... Our party is a national party. We will ensure that Sabah and Sarawak are well represented in our party leadership," he said.

Probe on irregularities

Anwar also reiterated his claims that complaints about irregularities during the party elections would be thoroughly probed and weaknesses will be rectified in future polls.

NONEHe denied personally receiving complaints about the polls and stressed that he has no contact with the elections committee chairperson Molly Cheah.

"I have met her a few times, but it was only to say hello. I have never (intervened), because the committee must be independent," he said.

Previously, PKR Youth chief candidate Badrul Hisham Shaharin (above) had submitted a letter to party president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, claiming that Anwar had interfered in the polls.

In welcoming the election of Azmin Ali as the new deputy president, Anwar expressed confidence that Azmin would do his best to strengthen the party further.

As for former deputy president Syed Husin Ali, who chose not to defend the deputy presidency, Anwar said that he would be given a role in the party in recognition of his experience and contributions.

Wisdom behind setbacks

pkrcongress 281110 nurul izzah anwar Moving on to the new lineup of vice-presidents and supreme council members, Anwar noted that he was happy with the high representation of women: two female vice-presidents - his daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar (left) and Fuziah Salleh - and Elizabeth Wong, who secured the highest number of votes in the supreme council contest.

Anwar added that he was also heartened by the young line-up for the supreme council.

The new council comprises 15 new faces and eight of them are below the age of 40.

"I look forward to see what are the new ideas from the young people. If they make mistakes, they better watch out," he said in jest.

Anwar said that the party must now look forward towards the next general election and reminded members that there is wisdom behind every setback.

"We didn't win in 2008. There is wisdom behind it. We found out that some candidates were no good... Now, we have cleansed the party of such people," he said.

Azmin: I'm close to Anwar

Meanwhile, Azmin today made his maiden speech as deputy president by admitting that he enjoys close ties with Anwar.

pkrcongress 281110 anwar wan azizah azmin "I don't apologise for it. If you say I'm close to Anwar, it's true that we're close. If you say that I'm his loyalist, yes, I'm his loyalist.

"I will be the first to defend him against the enemy," said Azmin (far right), to roars of approval from the audience.

Azmin was Anwar's private secretary during the latter's tenure as deputy prime minister and has worked for Anwar for 26 years.

Azmin said among his immediate priorities will be the attending of numerous programmes in Sarawak over a span of two weeks next month, in preparation for the Sarawak state elections expected soon.

Azmin also endorsed Wan Azizah's policy speech where she called for the concept of ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy) to be abandoned.

He said that it should be replaced with the concept of ketuanan rakyat (people's supremacy) as expounded by PKR.