

PKR reps in a rush to get down to work
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A real carnival atmosphere was evident at PKR's de facto Anwar Ibrahim's house in Segambut last night. The reason was obvious - the party has had its best ever results in a general election, winning 31 parliamentary and 40 state seats. MCPX

The manner in which the party's new Yang Berhormats patted each other on the back and shook hands, it was evident that this was a significant achievement for the party.

More interestingly, they had achieved this as a single party with three different races fighting on issues for everyone instead of their own communities.

pkr anwar meet elected candidates 090308 women repsThe modest dinner to congratulate all the winners last night looked more like conference for activists with R Sivarasa, Elizabeth Wong, Wee Choo Keong, Dr Syed Husin Ali, the new Selangor MB designate Khalid Ibrahim than a gathering of politicians.

Not until Anwar entered the stage did the event carry an air of politics. Nevertheless, after a quick round to congratulate the winners and console the less fortunate, the PKR de facto leader got down to business straight away.

With everyone ushered into his living room, the 60-year-old restored order with a quick, "Yang Berhormats, kita dah nak bermula. (YBs, we are about to start)"

"We called this meeting to meet all the Parliament and state representatives, to remind them of their commitment to a reform agenda."

"This is a historic moment and marks the beginning of a new era for the country, PKR and our political partners. We won because of the support and the aspirations of all the different races."

"Our representatives will be constantly reminded that the mandate is given by all Malaysians and not any specific race," said Anwar.

The party's main priority

While he admitted that race-base politics are still a factor in Malaysia, he hoped that PKR's multi-ethnic platform will be the base for an alternative vision.

"The assumption that this party cannot exist by analysts is flawed. What they attempted to do was to compare us to what Onn Jaafar tried to do 50 years ago. That had different circumstances and a different agenda."

pkr anwar meet elected candidates 090308 anwarSandwiched between his wife and party president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Syed Husin and Khalid, Anwar said that they are also bound to fight abuse of power, mismanagement and corruption.

Poverty, inflation and public housing issues will be their main priority.

Their first priority, is also to set up a state government in Selangor with Khalid as the menteri besar and support their partners DAP and PAS in Penang, Kedah and Kelantan. PKR was due to discuss the MB position in Perak last night.

"Once we are done with setting up or supporting our partners in the formation of state governments, everyone must get to work immediately," said Anwar.

But he told everyone that there should be no unnecessary costs involved.

"There will be no new cars or huge budgets for renovating offices and so forth. Those are the excesses of the past that we must not adopt."

pkranwar meet elected candidates 090308 lee boon chye "We will also not surrender any cars to the outgoing excos as is the normal practice, so that everyone uses the existing vehicles. Because the tradition of selling cars to the outgoing menteris besar cheaply need to be stopped," he explained.

On Saturday, Malaysia went through a historic moment more important than sending a man into space.

It was momentous not because it had given the opposition its biggest mandate. It was significant not because it denied Barisan Nasional its routine two-thirds majority. It was meaningful not because it was a peaceful transition.

But it was historic because Malaysians have come of age and broke away from their communal fears to vote away from racial lines.

The rakyat are used to promises to end corruption, provide transparency and to help the poor regardless of race before. Hopefully, PKR will keep theirs.

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