

Azmin : 'close to 30' BN reps in the bag
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Fauwaz Abdul Aziz

PKR vice-president Mohd Azmin Ali claimed today that the party has already persuaded "close to 30" Barisan Nasional members of Parliament to reject the leadership of its chairperson Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. MCPX

Declining to say how many exactly or where these elected representatives are from, the Gombak parliamentarian said they all agreed the country lacks a "strong and credible" leadership.

"Their concern is (for) the country, the nation. They want someone who is strong and credible to lead the country," Azmin told reporters after a thanksgiving gathering in Keramat, Kuala Lumpur.

azmin ali interview 220307 clarify "To them, even the non-Malays - the Chinese, Indians, Ibans and Kadazans - accept the fact that the leader has to be a Malay Muslim, but at the same time, that particular person has to be accepted by the other communities.

"In this context, they feel the best person is Anwar Ibrahim," said Azmin in reference to PKR's de facto leader.

In the March 8 polls, BN lost its two-thirds majority in Parliament when its candidates won only 140 seats. Opposition parties PKR, DAP and PAS won 82 seats.

The three parties - now dubbed the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) coalition - also captured four states while PAS retained its control over Kelantan.

Since the elections, PKR is said to have been courting BN MPs, especially in Sabah and Sarawak, in a bid to wrest the required 30 parliamentary seats from the ruling coalition to form the federal government.

Other options available

Reiterating that there was "no money or (other) transaction involved at all in these discussions", Azmin said these BN MPs, including from Umno and ordinary members at the party's grassroots level, were "generally dissatisfied with the leadership of Abdullah" .

He also disclosed that 'hopping' to PKR is not the only option available for these disgruntled parliamentarians.

Other than stepping down to make way for a by-election, they may also vote as BN MPs on a motion of no-confidence against Abdullah as BN chairperson, said Azmin.

He said this option is open to those BN MPs who fear they may be disqualified from their parliamentary or state seat or otherwise punished in the event an "anti-hopping" law was passed.

abdullah ahmad badawi pak lah and election annoucement parliament dissolve "We told the

BN and Umno leaders, 'Don't worry. Even if there is (the anti-hopping) law, we can resolve this... Umno members, generally, and on the ground, feel dissatisfied with the leadership of Abdullah,' said Azmin.

"(We told them,) 'What you do is, you enter Parliament, as an Umno MP, you stand up, and say 'I am a member of Umno but I don't have confidence in the leadership of Abdullah'. They need not jump," he added.

Azmin also said while there are 31 PKR parliamentarians who are willing to give up their seats to make way for Anwar to become Opposition leader, they are in no hurry to do so.

"They (Umno) are working against time. Not us. We have ample time to work on this."

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