

Anwar builds his Sarawak team
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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has started building on his own party's 'credible and committed team' in Sarawak as part of Pakatan Rakyat's plan to win control of the state government from the Barisan Nasional in the next state election due in 2011.
MCPX

anwar sarawak visit 250408 speech Clearly buoyed by Pakatan's major victory in the recent national polls in Peninsular Malaysia, the former deputy premier took the first step in announcing at a press conference in Kuching yesterday the names of several Dayak professionals, intellectuals and activists who had decided to join the party's struggle.

Among them were three well known Orang Ulu lawyers Baru Bian, Paul Raja and Harrison Ngau, who is also a former Baram MP, former Snap secretary-general Edmund Stanley Jugol and his son, Iban lawyer and former Snap youth leader Walter Entrie, former Sarawak Dayak National Union (SDNU) president and NCR land expert Nicholas Bawin and Iban lawyer Louis Jarraw, former Kapit wali kota (mayor) Frankie Badindang, Granda Aing, Talajan Lujoh and Cobbold Lusoi.

They were among a group of more than 20 Dayak professionals from the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu communities who turned up for the meeting during Anwar's half-day visit to Kuching. The PKR leader was on his way back to Kuala Lumpur after a visit to Sabah.

PKR has expressed confidence given the mood swing in Sarawak with all the unresolved issues, particularly NCR land disputes between native landowners and state authorities and beneficiaries of land leases issued by the government, corruption and cronyism, that Pakatan will be able to get a two-third majority in the next state election.

Presently, the opposition and Independents control nine out of the 71 seats in the state legislative assembly.

Promises for Sarawak

Anwar told a crowd of about 500 when opening PKR's new division in the predominantly Bidayuh parliamentary constituency of Mambong, 16km from Kuching, yesterday afternoon that a Pakatan Rakyat-led federal government would adjust the oil/gas royalties for Sarawak, Sabah and Terengganu from 5% to 20% because they deserve more of what's due to them.

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In the case of Sarawak, a four-fold increase in royalties would, on the basis of current prices, translate to as much as RM10 billion annually which would go direct to the state but subject to the expenditure following strict financial procedures, as the state was still lagging behind.

Anwar said the poor were found in all communities and that a Pakatan government would implement affirmative action based on merits, not race, and most critical is a policy catering to the welfare of the common folks and not to enrich cronies and political elites.

Anwar's visit came a day after a group of some 200 NCR landowners from throughout Sarawak had what was described as an open discussion on NCR land disputes and related matters in Kuching with a group of national and international NGOs.

During the press conference, he indicated his awareness that apart from NCR land being a major concern in Sarawak, other issues concerned matters of the civil service, abuse and misuse of power and corruption.

On reported differences between certain state PKR and DAP leaders, Anwar said Pakatan component parties generally enjoy a good working relationship, except for some skirmishes which were only to be expected.

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