

He's not bluffing, says Azmin
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Opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim was not bluffing when he said Pakatan Rakyat is ready to form the next federal government by Sept 16 this year, a senior leader from his party said.
MCPX

"Certainly he (Anwar) is not (bluffing). Certainly it is based on facts and figures when he said on many occasions that we have the numbers (to form the new federal government).

azmin interview 260408 talking "But what is important now is to ensure that when we declare the new federal government, it has to be a credible new federal government, we don't want to form a fragile government," PKR vice-president Azmin Ali told Malaysiakini.

Azmin, seen as a key player behind the ongoing crossover talk, added that a slim majority for the Pakatan opposition alliance to form the government is "not good" for the nation and people.

"Of course the sooner the better (for us to declare the new federal government) but we are not in a rush. The basis of our announcement is to ensure that we will form a credible and strong government," he reiterated during an interview at his office in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

Asked on the 'facts and figures' to back his claim, Azmin appeared to sidetrack the question in his reply: "As you are aware, we need a minimum 30 more seats (to get the simple majority), so we work along that basis."

Analysts: A strategic bluff

Two weeks ago, Azmin has said PKR - the biggest opposition party - has received an overwhelming response from the ruling Barisan Nasional MPs in the crossover talk and has exceeded its target of 30.

anwar ibrahim pc 180208 05The speculation intensified with Anwar, the PKR de facto leader, setting the timeline for the collapse of the BN-led federal government for the first time during a visit to Sabah earlier this week.

He said these BN MPs could jump ship by August and that it would be done no later than Malaysia Day, which falls on September 16.

Political analysts however have argued Anwar's claim was more of a "strategic bluff" and an "astute political move" by the politician to increase the internal disunity within the BN parties.

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 the remaining 82 seats.

The three parties - now called Pakatan Rakyat - also captured four states in Selangor,

Penang, Kedah and Perak while PAS retained its control over Kelantan.

PKR is now said to be courting BN reps especially in Sabah and Sarawak, in a bid to wrest the required 30 parliamentary seats to form the federal government.

The opposition party was capitalising on the grouses among Sabah and Sarawak MPs who had complained over its under-representation at federal level after the elctions.

BN starts feeling the heat

Reiterating that the monetary element was not involved in the talk, Azmin said what Pakatan offered was a "fair representation for Sabah and Sarawak", as well as a "package of development".

azmin interview 260408 office "We don't want to formulate any policy and ask the Sarawakians for instance to swallow without having proper debate and discussion at the federal level.

"The role that the Sarawakian BN reps can play if they wish to be with PKR is that we will ensure they have better representation and the rights of the Sarawakians will be better protected," he said.

Anwar has also said earlier that if the opposition took power, Sabah and Sarawak would be able to keep 20 percent of revenue from the oil they produce, up from the current five percent.

To a question on Sabah and Sarawak MPs who have established a reputation of jumping ship and may pose risk to the stability of the Pakatan government should it come into power, Azmin said he would not undermine the wisdom of these lawmakers.

Apart from Sabah and Sarawak, Azmin also verified that Umno parliamentarians in the peninsula were also approached.

The ongoing defection talks has placed BN on a defensive mood, with Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak saying yesterday the ruling coalition will not simply dismiss the threat.