

Anwar 'returns' to Parliament
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 29, 2008
Beh Lih Yi

After more than a decade, opposition icon and former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim was present in Parliament again, albeit in the public gallery.
MCPX

He was there as the spouse of the opposition leader, PKR president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail to attend the opening ceremony of the 12th Parliament.

Elated with the recent turn of events, Anwar - who donned a songkok for the occasion - stressed that today is the first step in the countdown to his return to the corridors of power.

12th malaysia parliament king officiate 290408 anwar ibrahim "It has began. This is a new beginning. Now that I am here, I will stay, there is no turning back," he told reporters.

Since his unceremonious sacking in 1998 and his subsequent jailing, the PKR leader has never been to Parliament.

He became free to run for public office again when a five-year ban stemming from his corruption conviction expired two weeks ago.

Previously, PKR had stated that one of the party's elected representatives might step down to pave the way for Anwar's return to active politics.

Following the March 8 polls, Anwar also claimed that there are enough MPs from Barisan Nasional who are willing to cross over to allow Pakatan Rakyat to form government. The opposition alliance is short of 30 seats to do so.

Pressed on these issues today, the former deputy premier quipped: "I am back already... There is the possibility of (contesting in) Kuala Kangsar and some other seats, I will discuss with the opposition leader."

rafidah aziz The Kuala Kangsar seat is currently held by Umno Wanita chief Rafidah Aziz.

It is widely expected that her victory will be disputed through an election petition as her opponent had complained that Rafidah had not complied with election laws by signing certain documents.

Wan Azizah, who was by Anwar's side, said her husband will be back "when the time is right." "Now we are still in-waiting," added the PKR president.

'Good to be back'

The couple arrived at the Parliament building 15 minutes before the opening ceremony by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Nur Zahirah.

12th malaysia parliament official king opening 290408 01 On his way to take his seat, Anwar greeted his former cabinet colleagues. Later in the chambers, he was seated in the public

gallery along with the spouses of other parliamentarians.

"Ten years is a long time, I feel good to be back to accompany the opposition chief, it makes me feel more humble and respect the grand lady," he said.

Anwar also said he was happy to meet his former colleagues, including Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, ministers Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz, Hishammuddin Hussein and Syed Hamid Albar.

"I always believe in politics you shouldn't be bitter. I accord them the same respect and in fact was happy to meet some very old friends in cabinet. They said very nice things to me but I wouldn't say what they told me."

After the ceremony ended, Anwar was also present in the VIP dining room together with the royal couple but did not interact much with the prime minister.

"We just said 'hello'... I was at the spouse table with the queen," he smiled.

PKR yesterday complained that the Parliament did not extend an official invitation to Wan Azizah and her spouse. The couple however received the invitation late evening yesterday.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news//82113>