

**Anwar: Defections to proceed as planned**  
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**Rahmah Ghazali**

PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim today said that the Sept 16 deadline for a high number of BN MPs to defect to Pakatan Rakyat remained on target.  
MCPX

A defection of 30 BN members of Parliament would allow the Pakatan coalition to take over the federal government.

anwar ibrahim pc 120508 03He however refused to divulge any details on the number of BN MPs involved or any other details regarding that "for the sake of their security".

"We have to appreciate the fact that we have to do it cautiously and knowing the fact that the system is quite repressive in this country," he added.

The climate of fear which is operating in the country, according to Anwar, has put an obstacle on giving out a clear timetable of the actual date of the crossovers.

"Some of them have to fly quietly to the neighbouring countries to have a discussion (with me). There are, however limitation and harassment (for the MPs)," he added, saying it would be dangerous if he were to reveal any names.

### **Sabah meeting**

He also admitted of meeting with some of them in Sabah on his way from Manila, the Philippines yesterday.

Anwar further reiterated that the announcement of the crossover would only be revealed when the Parliament is in session. The next sitting begins on June 23.

He however said the decision would have to be deliberated at length with the leaders of Pakatan.

He was speaking in a press conference after announcing the party's new supreme council members at their new headquarters in Tropicana, Damansara.

The newly-appointed members included top union boss Syed Shahir Syed Mohamud, former Abim president Dr Mohd Noor Manuti, former deputy secretary general Low Chee Chong and Seri Andalas state representative Dr Xavier Jayakumar.

The party also received 50,000 new members today, which included former MCA exco member Felicia Lim, former deputy president of the Malay Chamber of Commerce Mohd Adam Harun and former Mentakab Umno division deputy head Mat Lazim Derani.

### **Karpal 'taken out of context'**

Anwar also responded to a question of possible divisive views within Pakatan over the BN

defections into Pakatan.

He was specifically asked to comment on a recent remark made by DAP chairperson Karpal Singh that the chances of defections were remote and that he personally was not in support of the crossovers.

Anwar said that Karpal was "taken out of context" in media reports, adding that he (Anwar) always shared the concerns on the defecting MPs with other Pakatan leaders.

"They accept the fact and would consider applications of anyone who subscribes to the agenda of Pakatan," said Anwar.

"If people endorse (our) agenda and policies, Karpal does not have problems with the (crossover)," he said.

### **Ready to contest**

The Pakatan leader further explained that he did not need an approval from attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail to allow him to stand in a by-election.

Anwar's five-year ban from electoral politics expired on April 14 this year, freeing him to contest in a by-election or hold high party posts.

He said that he had not contested in a by-election yet as he was still consulting other party leaders and a number of MPs who had willingly agreed to stand down to allow him to contest.

The former deputy prime minister also said that he had received a letter from registrar of societies, granting him the necessary green light to become active in politics again.

"I've received the letter from the registrar (of societies). My lawyers have advised that we do not need an approval letter from the AG. The letter from the ROS is sufficient," he added.

Anwar also reiterated Pakatan's stand to bring down fuel prices when they come to power, giving fresh assurance today that he would rather lose his job than allowing people to suffer.

"If that (lower fuel price) doesn't happen, I will resign immediately," he said. Anwar is Pakatan's prime ministerial choice when the coalition comes to power.

Last week the government announced a drastic 78 sen fuel hike, causing general anger among the people.

### **Go slow on spending**

Anwar also hoped that the Pakatan Rakyat-controlled states will embark on an austerity drive and help reduce the people's burden from the fuel price increase.

He said the state governments concerned should coordinate their activities to reduce their administrative costs so that the allocations for development and the people's benefit would

not be affected.

"We should cut down on whatever costs, like allowances and other perks to show that we are sensitive to the people's suffering," he said.

The five Pakatan-ruled states are Selangor, Perak, Penang, Kedah and Kelantan.

Anwar said he would leave to the wisdom of the leaders in the respective states to decide on measures to reduce the administrative costs, except on matters which involved party policies, which had to be referred to the leadership of the parties concerned.

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