

**Q&A: Their fear must be real**  
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But Anwar Ibrahim said the fear of him coming to power was not shared by other senior police officers in this first of a two-part interview with MCPX Malaysiakini.

Malaysiakini: You keep on saying 'September 16, September 16', but a lot of people think you are bluffing. Are you bluffing?

Anwar Ibrahim: I would say that people were doubtful when we said we were able to seriously challenge the ruling government on March 8. Nobody generally - which includes Malaysiakini - thought that we (could win) control of five states.

anwar ibrahim exclusive pre permatang pauh interview 130808 07It is good that people have cautioned me with 'you're a bit too optimistic', but I am privy to many discussions that I cannot share for now. Based on that, I have ample reasons to suggest that - although we have been derailed somewhat because of all these episodes - we can make it.

You know, contrary to many of my friends in Pakatan (Rakyat) or the media, those in the ruling establishment, including the IGP (inspector-general of police) and his coterie of loyal clique, must be convinced, otherwise they wouldn't be desperate to go on this move. They are convinced that we're going to make it, so they have to make sure that I am stopped at all costs.

The reason is they are worried of their future - that if you become PM, there is fear that you may go after them. Will you?

This is unfortunate because it's not easy to come out from prison, being assaulted, being jailed, being smeared with the most nasty sort of attacks, and then suddenly say okay, 'malice towards none' - quoting (Abraham) Lincoln - and move on.

But then you realise, because you are stuck to certain principles, and talking about agenda, and talking about challenge, they went on again after you. Yes, there are civil suits against Mahathir (Mohamad), but these are all (filed) in the process because they kept repeating (the allegations), and I had to stop them from doing that, not with the intention of battling them as I don't want to waste my time with them.

musa hassan police igp pc 250607 mumBut how do you deal with people like (police chief) Musa Hassan (left), who went a bit too far in the process? It wasn't too late for him to just say okay, back off, but they went on because they thought - they were so confident - they would be able to, what do you called, entrapment.

Their fear must be real. But because this is seen even by many of the senior police officers as something personal, you can see not much enthusiasm among the entire police force.

Firstly, he's (Musa) going to retire. Secondly, why should we be dragged into this personal vendetta of this one man, supported probably by Khairy (Jamaluddin) and his colleagues. And in mentioning names, I have good reasons why I drag these names (out). I mean, in the case of Najib (Razak), Rosmah (Mansor), it is there in the public domain, but these people are

clearly convinced that we're going to make it.

But how do you run a government and affect changes, move forward - we need a new Malaysian awareness, we need unity of all races, we need a new vibrant economy, we need to reform the judiciary and bring back confidence in a more professional police force - if you get yourself engrossed with the past?

I'm not going to portray myself as very saintly or anything - no. Even for pragmatic, realistic considerations, I can't.

You need to fight it?

No, no, you have to move on, and you have to be prepared to forgive the past that affects you personally.

If it (involves) 2,000 acres and two billion ringgit - it's just not my right to forgive, they have to return the money. But otherwise, we cannot afford to drag the entire country back to the past.

Are you saying that if you happen to be PM, you may forget about the past?

I forgive, I can't forget.

mahathir kimma new office event 150708 03Did you know that Dr Mahathir said that if you become the PM, he'd leave the country?

I think he might have said that in jest [laughs].

Would you, if you become the PM, would you be taking actions for economic plunder, or for abuse of power, against certain top ranking people?

The last 10 years, I have forgiven, even though Mahathir tends to be a bit vindictive and very, very nasty with some of his comments, you see me, I just joke about it, I don't take it seriously. After all, he's not able to influence events.

But to see (Prime Minister) Abdullah Badawi, his son-in-law (Khairy), involved in this stage, after looking at what happened, this is pathetic to say the least. And with his pretensions, very religious, it's worse. It's better to be a very liberal, secular, 'don't believe in - some seculars do believe in - ethics and morality', but I'm saying clearly a person with no moral or ethical considerations, and not too pretentious but religious, and then suddenly talked about these things, so desperate.

How do you deal with it? I am by nature quite forgiving, but we will clear this hurdle first.

What would be your first task as opposition leader, given that you're likely to win?

Of course, I have to consult on the manner, the work, within Pakatan which people do sometimes take for granted, particularly (at) my level. You can get away at the lower levels sometimes with giving some comments here, but my own level, particularly for me, any policy issues that affect the Pakatan have to be well thought of, deliberated, among the leaders.

What do I do? Hopefully, I get to Parliament soon afterwards, be there prior to Budget, listen to Budget (speech). But of course, the prime thing is to get back in contact with those MPs that

have given their word that they would support (Pakatan) when I return to Parliament.

There is the issue of forming a shadow cabinet. This has been bandied about for a while but we haven't seen much coming out of it. Is that a major problem in trying to work out exactly who is qualified and how to go about doing this?

anwar ibrahim exclusive pre permatang pauh interview 130808 05It's not, because I think in my understanding with DAP and PAS leaders, there are some indication who would be replaced. There's no definite discussions on what portfolio because I think it is a bit too early, we still have a lot of time. But I don't see that as a problem...

Look at the five states, particularly the more mixed constituencies of Penang, Perak and Selangor. You find them working quite well, contrary to all these concerns expressed earlier, and they have very qualified people there manning the show. Not only there, I think they have very practical considerations of inviting experts or corporate leaders to discuss issues...

Similarly at the federal level, you can see Keadilan, PAS, and DAP, you find people with enormous experience... They say 'well, they were not ministers before', (but) so was (the) Labour party and (Tony) Blair and Gordon Brown.

But given that you said this is a government-in-waiting, and yet there is still no shadow cabinet.

Well, there is... we have not announced a shadow cabinet. It is not true to suggest that we don't have people with portfolios assigned to them.

Would that be one of your first tasks as opposition leader?

I agree, there have been a lot of calls actually, a lot of calls from people even now to represent the opposition team. I think I will put that as the first item on the agenda of the next meeting with Pakatan.

This Bar Council issue - do you think that this has created problems within Pakatan given that some elements within PKR and PAS are quite openly opposed to the forum?

Yes, it taught us a lesson that some of our decisions have got to be made well understood by the lower level (in the party). Probably we didn't make it too clear. But my statement was quite clear - prior to that - to say that, as a principle, we must allow this (the forum). We have communicated to the Bar Council our views, and PAS has come out with a statement - (PAS leader) Hadi (Awang) made it quite clear - that we must allow, but it has to be (behind) close door.

conversion forum protest 090807 mini postersThat is also my personal view for now because unless you are able to deal with it... I tried to get the Muslim leaders to appreciate the fact that we must allow for discussion. If we are not confident, that means (there is) something wrong with our belief and our faith. You must be confident to express and counter, and argue. So if you feel you are not happy that the Muslim representation (in the forum) is not adequate, not competent, then you send adequate, competent people there.

In fact, I discussed with (law lecturer) Mehrun (Siraj) last night, who happened to be there, and she said something startling - at the time this was discussed, this lady sister was giving a view, which not only the non-Muslims, but Muslims, had to listen. So we lost that chance.

Where exactly is (PKR parliamentarian and Bar Council protest leader) Zulkifli Noordin?

Well, I've been trying to get in touch with him.

You're sure you have no idea where he is?

Well, I have been told, (and) he has promised to call back so I'm going to see whether he has. I have not been in communication with him the last few days. But we did say that we would agree with what has been expressed by (PRK deputy leader) Syed Husin (Ali).

Will action be taken against Zulkifli?

Syed Husin has come out with a statement which represents the party's position, and I have been asked to speak to him (Zulkifli) to give him notice or some forms of questions and actions to be taken. I think, to be fair, since we are not able to contact him directly, we will have to wait until we are able to do so.

But some action will be taken?

Yes, clearly he has to be clear that party policies, party positions must be adhered to.

What kind of action?

Well, that's up to Syed Husin who leading the disciplinary committee and to the disciplinary board, which is quite independent of the party.

So he will be brought before the disciplinary board?

Well, the decision is, we will have to first ask him what happened.

Like show cause?

Yes, then we proceed from there.

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