

Sept 16: Pakatan supremo keeps 'em guessing
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 28, 2008
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Anwar Ibrahim at his first press conference as parliamentary opposition leader continued to keep everyone guessing on his Sept 16 plan, in which he said there would be a change of government.
MCPX

anwar ibrahim mp swearing in 080828 04The PKR supremo reiterated today that his plan to entice enough defectors from the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition to topple the government is still on track.

He was nevertheless tightlipped on the details of the plan, saying he would inform the media "at the right time" when repeatedly asked by journalists.

The Anwar-led Pakatan Rakyat coalition needs to persuade 30 BN parliamentarians to defect in order to form a new government.

He told Malaysiakini two weeks ago that one of his first tasks as opposition leader was to reconnect with the government MPs who had indicated their willingness to defect.

"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," he said in the exclusive interview.

Abdullah, Najib have lost mandate

Anwar was also asked to comment on the calls by Umno leaders Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Mukhriz Mahathir for Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to resign in wake of BN's humiliating defeat in the Permatang Pauh by-election.

anwar ibrahim opposition leader parliament 05"The prime minister has lost the mandate of the country. The deputy prime minister (Najib Abdul Razak), who spearheaded the (by-election) campaign, has been rejected outright," said Anwar.

"To me, it's not just Abdullah and Najib (who have been rejected) but their entire Umno clique and cronies who have amassed billions (in wealth)."

Anwar also criticised the controversial DNA Identification Bill 2008 - which is being debated in the House and slammed by opposition MPs as a politically-motivated piece of legislation.

"Nobody in their right mind can deny this is part of the machination of desperate politicians," he said, before leaving the packed press conference for his opposition leader's office located on the 14th floor of the Parliament tower.

anwar ibrahim mp swearing in 080828 03At his new office, he chaired his first meeting as opposition leader with top Pakatan leaders which lasted for about an hour.

Among those who attended the meeting were PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail,

PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and DAP chairman Karpal Singh.

Other top leaders included Azmin Ali and Dr Lee Boon Chye from PKR, Nasharuddin Mat Isa, Kamaruddin Jaafar and Salahuddin Ayub from PAS, and Lim Kit Siang, Lim Guan Eng and Teresa Kok from DAP.

Anwar was back at the House to join the debate at 11.55pm.

The opposition leader immediately made his presence felt when he briefly interjected Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud's (PAS-Kota Raja) speech on the DNA Identification Bill.

Meanwhile, Anwar's wife, Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, told reporters that she was gratified that her 10-year effort had finally paid off.

Wan Azizah won the Permatang Pauh seat after Anwar was jailed on charges of corruption and sodomy. She quit three weeks ago to pave the way for her husband to return to Parliament after an absence of 10 years.

Sapp MP first to congratulate Anwar

The first MP who got up to congratulate Anwar after he was sworn in as Permatang Pauh MP was backbencher Eric Enchin Majimbun (BN-Sepanggar), who is from the Sabah Progressive Party (Sapp).

anwar ibrahim mp swearing in 080828 01Sapp had two months ago threatened to move a no-confidence vote against the premier amidst speculations that Sabah and Sarawak-based MPs would defect to PKR.

The Sepanggar MP, who was first to speak during the parliamentary question-and-answer session this morning, congratulated Anwar - to the applause of Pakatan MPs - before proceeding to ask his question.

anwar ibrahim opposition leader parliament 04Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz, in responding to Majimbun's question, also congratulated Anwar.

During a supplementary question later, Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timor) described Anwar's victory as equivalent to a second political tsunami and dismissed BN as a 'sinking Titanic'.

Nazri rebutted that if there was a second tsunami, it had apparently blown Lim - who is former opposition leader - from his front row seat to his present fifth seat in the opposition row.