

Anwar wins, what now?
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 29, 2008
Jimmy Pauh

Let just take a breather and savour this momentous moment. Much has been written about Anwar Ibrahim's landslide victory in the Permatang Pauh (P44) by-election. I would not regurgitate the voluminous congratulatory messages appearing all over the Net.
MCPX

It is indeed a job well done. Now let us pause for a moment and try to extract some of the implications from this historic result.

1. Malaysians have voted in a resounding manner for change. The official result indicates that DSAI successfully obtained approximately 66% of the votes. The total number of votes cast is 46,811 while Anwar obtained 31,195 of the lot.

Now, taking into consideration the demographic of Permatang Pauh which is made up of approximately 69% Malays and 31% non-Malays, it would be safe to say that Anwar garnered around 60-65% of the Malay vote and 70-80% of the non-Malay vote.

Such consistency in voting across the ethnic groups gives a strong implication that Umno's so-called tried and tested 'divide and rule' policy is clearly outdated and rejected by the people.

2. By voting in Anwar, the wise people of Permatang Pauh have shown great political wisdom in focusing on prevailing issues rather than petty personal attacks and race-based diversion. Despite having the entire BN machinery plus mainstream media support, the 'lovable' BN candidate Arif Shah could only muster less than 50% of Anwar's votes.

Perhaps a case of right man in the wrong party? We must be thankful that Anwar won so convincingly, if not BN will be convinced their race-based policy is correct and future government policies will be dictated along this line.

3. The BN has clearly lost the support of the non-Malays. There is no other way to write about this. The Chinese and Indians are with Pakatan Rakyat and are likely to stay that way for a long time to come.

You can even sense that Gerakan and MCA leaders are beginning to be resigned to their fate, with voices coming out from both parties asking for a re-examination of their respective party's role in BN. It is hilarious to read both MCA president hopefuls trying to outdo each other by being more anti-Umno!

4. BN is now officially in a dilemma since their tactic of portraying Anwar as a Malay sell-out has backfired. To salvage their regime, they must decide whether to take a more multiracial stand or play the numerical game and concentrate on the Malay vote.

I feel even though the Malay voters in Permatang Pauh have rejected BN, Umno will intensify their nationalism agenda and further exacerbate the sensitive racial relationship issue in Malaysia.

5. Abdullah Badawi and Najib's position in Umno will be under tremendous scrutiny so

expect more calls from the grassroots and ambitious leaders like Tengku Razeleigh and perhaps Muhyiddin for a change in party leadership.

An unstable Umno would lend great help to Anwar's cause.

6. With this momentum, Anwar will be poised to call for leadership change in the government. The next few weeks could well decide Malaysia's future.

The people of Permatang Pauh have bravely taken the first step, and now it is the turn of the rest of the Malaysians.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/88819>