

Time to get to work, Anwar
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Anwar Ibrahim has proclaimed that he has sufficient number of MPs to defect to Pakatan Rakyat and to form the next federal government. If this is true, it will be the first time since independence that the BN will lose control of the government.

Hence, Anwar must plan his take over carefully to prevent any untoward incidents by certain BN members who are unwilling to relinquish power and will do anything to prevent the handover of power from happening.

As much as the results of the 12 General Elections shows that the vast majority of the rakyat has rejected racial politics, it cannot be denied that the Malays must form the backbone of political power of Malaysia. Hence Anwar must first reassure the Malays that their rights as enshrined in the constitution will be protected and upheld and all times.

The Ahmad Ismail and Teresa Kok incidents highlight that certain issues involving race and/or religion can be easily played-up by those who wish to cling on to power and these group of individuals may be telling the Malays that they will lose all their powers and rights should BN lose power.

The Malays are the majority in the country and having the majority of the rakyat restless and wondering about their rights will not be good for the country. Anwar must ensure that the issue of Malays losing power is not played up by irresponsible quarters as this can lead to unrest.

Anwar must also reassure the Malays that economic policies to help uplift the status of the Malays will continue, albeit in a much more transparent manner. Although the general economic situation of the Malays has improved tremendously since the implementation of the NEP in 1970, much needs to be done to uplift the economic status of the Malays and also other communities that have been left behind.

Anwar must wipe out the leakages and corruption that have robbed economic aid and wealth from reaching those who are really in need, regardless of religion or race. Help those who really need help and while it is true that there are more poor Malays compared to non-Malays, Anwar cannot forget the plight of the non-Malays in the country.

Government scholarships must be given to those who truly deserve it, i.e. smart and gifted Malaysians who cannot afford higher education, not the children of ministers and politicians who can easily afford to pay for their children's higher education.

Anwar must also reassure the civil service that it will be business as usual. The new government will ensure a smooth change in administration and the civil service must be professional in serving the government regardless of whether it is BN or Pakatan Rakyat.

Anwar has to engage and assure the police force and armed forces that Pakatan will be able to take over political power smoothly and the duty of these forces is to keep the peace and order. This is also to prevent certain groups of individuals who may use this opportunity to create mischief.

The police and armed forces must always remember that their loyalty is to king and country and country here means the government of the day and not BN or Umno. Should the BN government lose power in a democratic process, the police and armed forces must continue to pledge their loyalty to the new government. Anything short of this will be seen as mutiny.

The Anwar of 2008 is very different from the Anwar of the 1970s or 1980s and even the early 1990s. The situation in Malaysia too has been very different since the 1970s and today. Today, Anwar is a leader representing all Malaysians. He is no longer the pro-Malay student leader or Malay activist that he was in his younger days.

Anwar must also reassure the non-Malays that their rights will be protected and that all Malaysians are equal under the law. Anwar must show that although the rights of the Malays will be protected, nothing will be taken away from the non-Malays and racial politics will no longer be practiced or even tolerated.

Anwar has to also reassure investors that there is stability in the new government. Under the administration of Dr Mahathir, stability was the key point, albeit at the expense of human rights.

However, of late, instability and indecisiveness have plagued Pak Lah's administration. One example of this was the unveiling of a sweeping and controversial windfall tax for IPPs only to remove it after much pressure from key players in the financial industry but not before the stocks of the IPPs took a beating, wiping of hundreds of millions of ringgit from the stock market. Who is going to compensate these investors from sudden changes in government policy?

Anwar must introduce proactive and investor friendly policies to stimulate our flagging economy and correct all the imbalances, imperfections and corruption that he has been talking about. Government policies must not only be properly thought out before being announced, they must also be implemented correctly.

Anwar must also continue with some of the policies introduced by Pak Lah which are beneficial to the country such as reforming the police force and the Anti Corruption Agency and restoring the independence of the judiciary.

These are just some of the many responsibilities that await Anwar. The task at hand for Anwar is heavy but Malaysians are confident that he can handle it.

The rakyat are looking forward to a new Malaysia for all Malaysians.