

Anwar: Malaysians reject new PM
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Pakatan Rakyat leader Anwar Ibrahim today said that Umno's failure to win the Bukit Gantang parliamentary seat was an indication that voters have rejected Najib Abdul Razak as prime minister.

"The by-election was a referendum on him. Their entire line of campaigning was that this new leader must be given a chance.

"They said that Umno made a mistake in the past and now it should be given a chance under Najib... that's fine.

"And they even brought back Dr Mahathir... that was the problem," said Anwar in a press conference at the PKR headquarters this morning.

The opposition leader added that the BN campaign was to promote Najib's unity call involving all races, apart from playing up the Malay supremacy race card.

"But that has crumbled," he said.

Anwar said that Najib should now have some humility to acknowledge that his calls for reforms have failed.

"He must take the initiative to make the reforms," he added.

He also dismissed suggestions that Najib would be calling for a snap election anytime soon.

"Umno will not consider that at all. If they do, God willing, we will form the next government," he said.

He added that unlike Umno, Pakatan would not play the race cards to win elections.

"We must appeal to Malays to endorse all candidates, even non-Malays and non-Muslims. This shows our maturity," he said.

And it was this which he said resulted in the Chinese and the Indians continuing to support Pakatan candidates in both Bukit Gantang and Bukit Selambau.

He also added that the Malay support in Bukit Gantang was sustained while it increased in Bukit Selambau.

No magic for Najib

Going back to the electoral defeats handed by his party to BN/Umno in Bukit Gantang, Anwar said the defeat was a major setback for Najib.

He said that the arrival of a new prime minister would naturally come with a high level of expectations from the people.

"When Mahathir came in, there was huge enthusiasm and expectation...similarly when Abdullah, he had put the entire opposition off guard and crippled PKR from five parliamentary seats to just one in 2004 elections.

"However, when Najib came in, he had proven the political pundits were wrong. We must rejoice that the opposition is getting stronger," he said.

Anwar said the magic or mantra which followed a new leader into his office did not happen for Najib.

"This had never happened in this manner in the past. You can announce to free detainees or to amend the repressive Internal Security Act. However, whatever announcements made will not necessarily convince the people.

"Whatever announcements or assurances that you give people are not able to convince the masses. People are no longer gullible to accept populist announcements or pronouncements," he added.

In four by-elections that have taken place since March 2008, the Anwar-led Pakatan Rakyat has won decisively, and in each case with an increased margin of victory.

"We have won in Malay strongholds and we have won in mixed ethnicity areas. Our support among the people is clearly increasing," he said.

Fairus to remain state rep

Anwar also suggested that his candidate in Batang Ai, Jawah Gerang, could have lost the by-election as a result of some vote-manipulation.

"We did not make a mistake in naming him. I think he was the right candidate.

"He lost in the interior areas - areas where the votes were not counted in places where they should be counted," he said.

He also joked that PKR would have won in Batang Ai if Umno had sent its former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad over there for campaigning.

However, Anwar refused to comment further on Mahathir's last-minute campaigning for Umno in Bukit Gantang and Bukit Selambau.

"No comment on Tun. Let him say what he wants to say about me... he has been doing that for a long time."

Anwar also rubbished speculations that Penang Deputy Chief Minister (1) Mohammad Fairus Khairuddin would be resigning as the Penanti state representative.

"Not true. He will resign as the deputy chief minister and state exco member effective today. Nothing else," he said.

When pressed by journalists if the Penanti seat will become vacant soon, Anwar said Fairus will be the state representative for the seat until the next general election.

Anwar was also asked on the 'big announcement' which he was supposed to make after the by-elections.

He was originally slotted to be making the announcement during a ceramah at Bukit Selambau but he held back stating that the time was not right.

Today when asked about it, Anwar said that he had actually made a big announcement in Bukit Selambau in regards to the defections of PPP members into PKR.

"We announced the virtual dissolution of Kedah PPP. Isn't that a major announcement?" he asked.

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