

**Form a shadow cabinet by March, Anwar told  
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Eighteen civil society organisations today called upon Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim to set up a Pakatan Rakyat shadow cabinet as soon as possible to prove that they are ready to govern when the need arises.

They said that Anwar must present his team of shadow ministers not later than his rival Najib Abdul Razak announces his line-up in March.

Najib is set to take over as the prime minister next March following a transition plan agreed with the present Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

parliament anwar pc on motion rejected 241108Anwar's opposition alliance made historic inroads in the March general election by denying Barisan Nasional its long held two-thirds majority in the Parliament.

The opposition parties - named Pakatan Rakyat after the general election - also won four states, and retained Kelantan in the polls.

Anwar himself was voted into Parliament in August after a 10-year absence when he won the Permatang Pauh by-election.

In an interview with Malaysiakini just before the Permatang Pauh by-election Anwar had said that he would make the formation of the shadow cabinet his priority after the by-election.

However, there has been no official news from Pakatan on the shadow cabinet although there were speculations that the parties - PKR, PAS and DAP - had agreed to ink a common agenda which could lead to the formation of a shadow cabinet.

### **Three compelling reasons**

The 18 civil society organisations today said in a statement that it was important for the Pakatan to form a shadow cabinet as it indicated the opposition's readiness to take over the task of governing from the incumbent government.

The organisations said there were three compelling reasons for Pakatan to announce its line-up as soon as possible.

"First, it facilitates division of labour amongst Pakatan parliamentarians and provides stronger check and balance to BN frontbenchers.

"The public has no idea now which Pakatan parliamentarian can speak authoritatively on a particular policy domain like labour, education or environment," they said.

They added that the assignment of portfolios would also enhance the participation of civil society and individual citizens in public policy formulation.

Secondly, they argued, that a shadow cabinet also helped to consolidate the policy position

of Pakatan component parties.

"This would reduce public confusion which often happens now when the parties contradict each other in public," they said.

And finally, the 18 argued that a shadow cabinet can help both synchronise some common policies of the five Pakatan-ruled states and coordinate the federal and state branches of Pakatan coalition.

They said that the public deserved to know the Pakatan policies on preservation of water catchment area, on access to public information and on local elections.

### **Make it the top priority**

"We call upon Anwar to make formation of shadow cabinet his top priority from now to March 2009.

"Nearly nine month after the March elections, Pakatan which has vowed to take over the federal executive power via crossover of BN parliamentarians must now be prepared to show that they are not only interested to govern, but able to do so," they said.

PKR, the mainstay of Pakatan, and of which Anwar is the de facto leader, will be hold its annual meeting over the weekend.

Anwar is expected to raise the issue of his failure to topple the government as he had earlier promised.

Among the organisations that endorsed the statement included All Women's Action Society (AWAM), Center for Independent Journalism (CIJ), Center for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), Group of Concern Citizen, Suaram, Women's Aid Organisation and Youth section of KLSCAH.

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