

stability and continuity. The only major issue we accept is the menteri besar's recommendation to review the water agreement. The water agreement is virtually scandalous! And it is a burden to consumers.

Nades: What about land alienation to cronies? You cannot take the land back because the deal is done.

Anwar: There are many ways to deal with this. If the land is given, we can go through the plans; we want to know why this is done in such a way.

Terence: But you are not going on a witch hunt, are you?

Anwar: I think it will be a problem for us, because it is endless. Then we will spend the next two years just doing this instead of running the states that we won. Immediately our plans are to move on by ensuring a vibrant economy. Drawing foreign investment, but problems affecting the poor are top on our list.

Yesterday we went to Kampung Jawa (in Klang) to visit the Malay and Indian squatters. A contention was the demolished temple. So I told (Mentri Besar Tan Sri Abdul) Khalid (Ibrahim), you better deal with this immediately. In two weeks get it done; give them their land and pay compensation to rebuild their temple. Of course they will demand for this and that. That's normal, but we draw the line.

Then it's their housing status. Khalid was concerned with Ijok where some areas have no water supply. It cost just RM200,000 to supply the water, so Khalid has announced that water will be supplied. These things must happen whether it's a Malay area, Chinese area or Indian area, it must happen. There are huge problems in Selangor and he (former Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo) has the audacity to talk about governance!

Nades: What are your plans after April 13 when you are eligible to contest for political office? Your wife is Opposition Leader - a position which is being warmed for you.

Anwar: Yes, but it is still early. Parliament only convenes in May. We still have time. I have to travel overseas for some engagements and I have to resign from my positions (in several foreign think tanks and academic boards) ... meetings and lectures in Harvard and at Kennedy School ... we'll see. But now the focus is on having a cohesive opposition and make sure the state governments are on track.

Terence: Are you ready to take over?

Anwar: This is for the MPs and the people to decide. We just want to make sure that the states are running well, and that we are prepared for Parliament. We have time to come to that.

Terence: If you asked me two weeks ago, one would dismiss Anwar Ibrahim being prime minister. But today, there is such



likelihood, with the dawn of the two-party system.

Anwar: Yes, well, like I said, we actually won the election.

Terence: While Anwar can become PM, there seems to be a dearth of individuals who would be able to govern and this brings me to the formation of the shadow cabinet.

Anwar: Yes, when all these fellows took over ... (former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) ... they had no administrative experience. Myself too ... so was the first generation of civil servants. As long as we have a clear programme and agenda, and more importantly here and now, clearer ground rules we will be all right. No way are we going to tolerate alienation of land to your son, daughter, son-in-law. No way! I think we have to work as a team.

As far as qualified people are concerned, you look at (DAP stalwart Lim) Kit Siang, he is still there. We were discussing some election laws last night and he brought up some laws which I don't remember. (laughs) He says, "Anwar you were finance

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minister, how can you not know this?"

I said: "Yalah Kit, I don't remember." Then he reminds me.

I think he is certainly qualified to serve. You have (PAS president) Hadi (Awang) who has four years experience of being menteri besar of Terengganu ... and many others.

Nades: Come to think of it, you have some experts on your side like Charles

Santiago on water and R. Sivarasa on human rights.

Anwar: There you are! Some of them of course are not as well-known as I am but Siva is a Rhodes scholar ... very articulate. Syed Husin Ali is one of the more renowned scholars.

Nades: How did you manage 15 days of campaigning with a bad back?

It was not easy. We were using my Dad's car a Mercedes since it was bigger. I had to *duduk bersila* like in yoga. (laughs)

Also, we had (PKR deputy president) Dr. Syed Husin Ali. He didn't want to stand in this election, but he was here manning the fort, while I was travelling all over the country. I was wondering who would be doing this as (former PKR Youth chief) Ezam (Mohd Noor) is gone, Nik Nazmi (Nik Ahmad who won the Seri Setia state seat in Selangor) is gone; (Sim) Tze Tzin (who won the Pantai Jerejak state seat in Penang) is gone ... then I realised I was handicapped. My staff was making all the arrangements.

Terence: Do you think the media has been fair with the new state governments under Barisan Rakyat?

Anwar: They have not been fair to them. What with these loaded questions and their own agenda. Give them a chance to do something like

how I suggested to Guan Eng that he should go to the Malay villages, no one highlighted it when he went to Tanjung Tokong.

That's why I was very rough with the *Utusan* guy. It's not their fault though, I know that when they start pushing, they have their instructions but repercussions can be great.

Terence: Can we touch a little on some of the media organisations that used to blacklist you but now want

I don't deny that there are problems. Even within Keadilan, we have contending candidates, the DAP and PAS also have issues. But in the case of Perak, I understand the problem. PAS had the least number of seats so naturally, for DAP to take a tougher stance is quite understandable."

to put you on Page One? Also associates who once had no time for you, but now are queuing up to see you?

Anwar: (Laughs) I have no malice. You know, sometimes I laugh at these people. This is the quality of people and they think they are great.

I have no personal agenda. They have. Some of them are scared. Dead scared! They came to see me saying we are sorry, but were forced to do this and do that. In a way it is good - not that it is fair for them to put me in prison and treat me that way ... but it is a good experience. And if people make mistakes and are remorseful, we should give them a chance. I always believe that.

Nades: But what was your problem with (former PKR vice president) Chandra Muzaffar? He came out very scathing against you.

Anwar: I was in prison when he first decided to attack and smash me to pieces prior to the 2004 elections. He had problems within the party, initially with the Youth Wing ... Ezam, later (former PKR vice-president) Marina Yusof. I was still backing him but he came out very strong against me. I still wonder why.

Terence: After Chandra was released from the ISA, he seemed to be more pro-establishment.

Anwar: Well, he went through a lot. I can't deny that and I do appreciate his initial contributions to Keadilan. I did not want to pursue litigation (over his statements against Anwar during the election), but my lawyers advised me (to proceed) and the letter (of demand) was already sent.

Terence: Do you want to retort against Chandra's allegations about the words you uttered when you visited the Hindu temple in Penang?

(Background: In March 27, 1998, a group of Muslims marched from the Kampung Rawa mosque to the nearby Sri Raja Raja Madurai Veerani temple, angered by the loud ringing of the temple's prayer bells. The resulting clash between 500 Muslims and Hindus resulted in several people being injured. The dispute was settled when the state government provided an alternative site for the temple.)

Anwar: These accusations are excessive. Did he ask me what happened at the mosque? I was DPM at that time and nobody wanted to go down there. I went to the mosque and then the temple.

(Then) IGP (Inspector General of Police Tan Sri) Rahim Noor called up the Penang CPO (chief police officer) and told him: "Tell Anwar not to go down to the mosque as the police cannot guarantee his safety."

(Incidentally it was Rahim Noor who gave Anwar his black eye that inspired the PKR symbol).

I told the CPO: "You call

back the IGP and tell him, I cannot be a Penang leader if I can't settle this problem."

Nobody wanted to go! Koh Tsu Koon, Shariff Omar, all the excos *semua tak nak pergi!* So I went.

You know the problem? I told the mosque people, *azan* five times a day is ok but there were some announcements, touching on Melayu and Islam, some hints ... so I told them: "*Lima kali. Lebih daripada itu, I have a problem. I kena rampas you punya mike.*" (Five times. Anything more, I will have to seize your microphone.)

So they said: "*Jangan Datuk.*" So I said: "You know I'm with you, don't overdo it."

I also told Koh Tsu Koon to give them the land for the (relocation of the) temple.

So, I told the (Muslim) people, you *pukul budak Hindu umur 12 tahun*, (hit a 12-year-old Hindu boy) is not right. So they settled and shook hands. Done.

I only brought my plainclothes guards. Even the police were not allowed in the temple because people were already angry as they fear-gazed the neighbourhood.

I said the same thing to the temple committee: "I know your prayer times." I was studying in Malay College Kuala Kangsar where there was a temple next door. You don't have to look at your watch. Teng! Teng! Teng! Teng! 6am. Teng! Teng! Teng! Teng! 6pm.

That's interesting. I am a traitor to the Malays'. I have not taken one share, no taxi permit, no contract in the name of bumiputra and all those so-called champions of Malays have taken hundreds of taxi permits, APs and contracts by the hundreds of millions of ringgit."

So I told them don't provoke because during the Muslim prayer times they were ringing the bells even louder.

So I told them that I warned the mosque committee that I will seize the microphone. So, to the temple committee, I said if you do the same thing, I will also *rampas* your

bells.

And what did Chandra say? That I threatened to silence all bells in Hindu temples across the nation? It's not true. Of course I had to sound very tough also. How do you solve the problem when they are fighting like that?

It is totally wrong what they are trying to portray me as. I am very indebted to the Indian community. They have helped me a lot. You see the Bukit Selambau fellow (Independent candidate V. Arumugam)? He said he will join PKR if I come there and hold his hand. So I did. And he won, and now he has joined Keadilan!

Terence: What is your take on the new cabinet? Some say that it is very Umno-centric.

Anwar: Ya! First I can see that there are attempts to respond to the electorate but overall it is a disappointing line-up. It is not catered for the expectations of people. There seem to be some shift in policies but then some characters tainted with corruption continue to be in office ... well, these are exciting times!