

Anwar: I'm still open to conciliation

No plans to dismiss Azmin despite calls from delegates who want unity

The Star - 9/12/2019 pg. 4

By R.S.N. MURALI, TARRENCE TAN and FATIMAH ZAINAL
newsdesk@thestar.com.my



PKR National Congress 2019
Dec 5 - Dec 8

MELAKA: PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has struck a conciliatory tone following calls for his deputy to be sacked after a walkout at the party's national congress.

Despite the commotion, brawls and walkout which took place during the four-day congress, Anwar said doors for conciliation between him and Datuk Seri Azmin Ali were still open.

"May I quote John F. Kennedy? We should never fear to negotiate and we should never negotiate out of fear.

"So, the conciliation must be an open process," he told reporters after the closing ceremony of the PKR National Congress at the Melaka International Trade Centre

here yesterday.

Anwar said for now there were no plans to dismiss Azmin as the PKR deputy president.

He said this was raised by several delegates but was not agreed upon by the party's leadership.

"I have no problems to negotiate but the sentiments of the party are that they want unity and they will not tolerate those who are undisciplined," he said.

Asked if he would forgive Azmin, Anwar replied: "I'm a forgiving person.

"But this is not a personal issue. I have to listen to the voices and the sentiments (of the delegates).

"I have listened to their inten-

tions, so we have to give them some space," he said.

On the first day of the congress, several delegates called for the sacking of leaders, emphasising the need to enforce more discipline within the party.

Most of them, who appeared to be aligned with Anwar's faction, also called the leaders "pengkhianat" (traitors) within the party.

Yesterday, Azmin, along with other leaders aligned to his faction such as Zuraida Kamaruddin, Sivarasa Rasiah, Amirudin Shari and Datuk Mohd Rashid Hasnon, were absent from the congress.

Only PKR vice-president Tian Chua was present, where he was jeered by delegates after delivering a speech in favour of Azmin.

About 100 members walked out of the congress on Saturday afternoon, claiming that the speeches

made by delegates were mostly critical of Azmin.

During a joint press conference after the walkout, Azmin took Anwar to task, slamming the Port Dickson MP for triggering personal attacks by delegates after he raised the story of Si Kitol and Raja Mendeliar on the history of Melaka in his speech.

Anwar claimed that he was also invited to a dinner in Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel with PKR leaders aligned to Azmin.

"He (Azmin) invited me two days ago.

"I told him I have functions every Sunday night in my house," he said, adding that he was unable to make it to the dinner.

Anwar said more than 80% of delegates were present during the congress, which "was big for me".

He acknowledged that Azmin

had told him during a private meeting to ensure that no delegates would use the congress to attack one another.

"But if the delegates say they want leaders to observe discipline and honour their pledges, how do you control that?

"I merely wanted the delegates to avoid casting aspersions or personal attacks, which the 90% avoided, except when they walked out, we lost control of that.

"But before that, the people maintained decorum in their speeches.

"You can't expect a democratic party to be just a mouthpiece of their leaders."