

Majority support is crucial to become PM, says Anwar

By **ZAKIAH KOYA**

newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: It's not a crime to want to be the prime minister but those aspiring should first overcome the agreement signed by Pakatan leaders, said PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

They also need to ensure they have majority of support from the members of parliament, said Anwar.

He further said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will honour the promise to pass the premiership to him as agreed before the last general elections.

He said this during an exclusive interview with Turkish media, when asked if he knew that Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali was also "eyeing the throne".

"It is not a crime for anyone to aspire to be a Prime Minister but he has to enjoy the support of the majority. For now, until the meeting last week, among party leaders, there is no consideration for any other name.

"People can dream or aspire but that does not mean that you will shake or scuttle the process. Furthermore, it has been duly agreed and signed so you have to then undo this process. There is no attempt or initiative to undo this.

"We are stuck with the agreement duly signed by party leaders in January five months before the election," said Anwar.

He also said that Azmin had never told him that he wants the job and that even if he does, the premiership is not a personal choice.

"The issue is not Dr Mahathir or Anwar. It is not my decision or Dr Mahathir's personal decision ultimately. It is the decision of the majority of the House," said Anwar.

He also lambasted those who used the Malay race to champion their own politics and said that the very people who are doing so were the very ones who condoned massive corruption and kept the Malays poor.

"Even patriotism can be a refuge for scoundrels. So, now, they reserve the issue of race because they fear the tough stance I have

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

against corruption and abuse of power. My interest is to proceed on that score. I am a Malay and a committed Muslim and I want Muslims and the Malays to succeed but I am also a leader for all Malaysians, he said.

He said there should be a transparent programme to assist the poor, irrespective of race.

"The vast majority of them is the Malays. What are you talking about Malay supremacy when you condemn them to poverty and you enrich the few, you condone corruption and you ignore the ethical value of universal values of Islam," said Anwar.

He added that the people's main concern is the bread and butter issue. And while in prison, he had "kept sane because one is not bothered by news at your expense".

"I had access to my family and lawyers. The prison guards were marvellous and supportive. There were whispering and smuggling of letters and reports," said Anwar.

Anwar has been jailed twice for sodomy, which his supporters had criticised as being politically motivated. His first conviction was overturned, while he was granted a royal pardon for the second.

At the same interview, Anwar also spoke about the impact of the 1MDB scandal and how the Sedition Act must be repealed because there are enough laws to handle libel.

Anwar was being interviewed by Turkish interviewer Imran Garda in a special edition of "The Newsmakers" broadcasting from the TRT World Forum, in Turkey.