

PM's rating

The dip may be due to a few in the cabinet

NOV 24 marked a year in office for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his unity government, an administration formed by a coalition of political parties. We are not aware if his admin-

istration has done any self assessment, but if it did one, the government hasn't shared the results with the people. Be that as it may, 1,220 voters have done so in a survey conducted last month by independent pollster Merdeka Center. The approval rating is a patchy 50 per cent, with 60 per cent surveyed saying the country is heading in the wrong direction. Anwar did much better in December last year, notching a commendable 68 per cent. The administration, too, came in for a lower rating, from 54 per cent last year to 48 per cent in October. Why the big dip? Put it down to people's dissatisfaction with the economy, the menu of the year, so to say. Political instability and poor administration came in for mention, too, though they reflected the unhappiness of a smaller percentage of the people surveyed. From one angle, it can be validly argued that the views of 1,220 aren't the same as those of the 32 million Malaysians. Or more accurately, those of the 21.1 million voters who were eligible to vote in the election last year. A thousand can never ever be a million,

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numerically speaking that is.

But it may be politically inexpedient to ignore their views. We are glad the government is taking the findings positively, promising to make the necessary

changes as it charts the next four years of its mandate.

It won't be fair to read the low rating of Anwar's leadership as his sole fault. It is more a problem of the competence of some of his ministers and deputy ministers. These incompetent ministers

have not turned in the results that people hoped for. Coalition politics often poses a problem for a prime minister. He can't pick and choose ministers as he pleases. Some incompetence gets thrust upon him. The component parties can do better, and must do better. What is good for the party may not be good for the nation. The prime minister must not be hindered from taking the country to a good place. Anwar, on the other hand, has been a good salesman for the country by bringing in billions in investments. From the get-go, he has been travelling the globe in an effort to get all the investments Malaysia needs. Just in the first half of this year, RM63.3 billion of foreign direct investment had made it to the shores of

Malaysia. If a comparison is needed, Malaysia only managed to attract RM74.6 billion for the whole of last year.

But one man can only do so much. Anwar's ministers must help him in turning his pledges into things visible and impactful to the people. Will they? The survey rating appears to hint that a few won't be able to. Many observers have said so, too, even before the Merdeka Center survey results became public. It is only fair that those who can't deliver give way to others who can. To stay on is to hinder others from delivering.

The nation needs competent ministers, not seat-warmers.