

'MUAFAKAT NASIONAL TALK NOT SERIOUS'

Anwar says unity govt intact, focused on economic growth, safeguarding the people's welfare

JULIANNA JALALUDDIN
AND AMALIA AZMI
PETALING JAYA
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has brushed aside talk of reviving Muafakat Nasional, stressing that the unity government under his leadership remains strong and intact.

Anwar, who is also Pakatan Harapan chairman, said discussions on reviving MN have not reached a serious level.

Formed in 2019, MN was a Malay-Muslim political alliance between Umno and Pas.

"That is not serious yet. I have not received any information. It is up to each party.

"What is important now is that the unity government remains intact and everyone has pledged to focus on economic growth and safeguarding the welfare of the people until the next general election," Anwar said after performing Friday prayers at Masjid Jumhuriyah here yesterday.

Asked whether the cohesion of the unity government could be

affected if MN was revived, Anwar dismissed the notion.

"That is a matter of their own ambitions and fears. Whether they split (or not) is not my concern. We are not involved, that is Pas' and Bersatu's issue.

"Their separation is not the concern of the unity government."

Talks on reviving MN resurfaced following the political crisis in Perlis. It was claimed that several Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia and Pas assemblymen signed statutory declarations to withdraw support for former menteri besar Mohd Shukri Ramli.

Pas then sacked three assemblymen. Pas' Shukri, who is Sanglang assemblyman, resigned as menteri besar on Dec 25.

Three days later, Perlis Bersatu chairman Abu Bakar Hamzah, who is Kuala Perlis assemblyman, was appointed menteri besar.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Dr Muhamad Akmal Saleh had called for the revival of MN after some quarters in Barisan Nasional expressed unhappiness with remarks by DAP's Puchong member of parliament Yeo Bee Yin about jailed former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's failed bid for house arrest.

Dr Akmal said Umno Youth would hold a convention on the party's direction and its role in the unity government.

Titled "Umno's direction: Stay or leave the unity government", the convention is set to be held at the World Trade Centre Kuala

Lumpur today.

On another matter, Anwar said he had instructed the Housing and Local Government Ministry to facilitate, enhance and improve Ramadan bazaars, particularly in ensuring better transparency, facilities and cleanliness.

He cited Petaling Jaya as an example of best practice in the allocation of stalls for bazaars, particularly its use of online registration to prevent stalls from being allocated through agents who profit via commissions.

He said the bazaars provide an opportunity for the public, especially those from the lower-income group, to run small businesses and earn additional income.

"Municipal councillors should cooperate to ensure the process is better organised and to prevent profiting through commissions."

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said although the issue was often addressed at higher levels, the situation on the ground remained chaotic in some areas.

Based on papers presented to the government, he said Petaling Jaya's online registration system was used as a model, where access was opened as widely as possible and efforts were made to ensure cleaner facilities.

"If the state government and local authorities work together, I will speak to the minister to seek assistance, so that facilities at Ramadan bazaars can be improved, particularly in terms of water supply and cleanliness Control."