

Pakatan now ready to form federal government, says Anwar
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By Shannon Teoh

JOHOR BARU, Nov 27 – Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today that Pakatan Rakyat was now ready to form the federal government after helming five states following the landmark 2008 election.

He said that if the electoral pact had taken Putrajaya three years ago “we may have been careless” but governing the states it won three years ago provided a “training ground” for the fledgling coalition.

“The party has struggled and suffered not one or two years, but over 10 years. If in 1999 we had won, we were not ready,” the PKR de facto leader (picture) said of the election that followed immediately after his sacking as deputy prime minister.

“In 2008, it was our first test to form state government. If we had formed federal government, we may have been careless. It is a training ground.

“We cleaned out the defectors, the dirty things from the party,” he added, referring to the six MPs and five assemblymen who have left PKR since the 12th General Elections.

Two assemblymen who left PKR in February 2009 had caused the fall of PR’s Perak administration.

Anwar said that three years ago, the party had “no strength in Sarawak... Sabah was a mess.”

The Permatang Pauh MP said gains made in April’s Sarawak state election, where it increased its representation from one to three assemblymen, showed the party is “now twice as strong as in 2008.”

“This is the best opportunity since 1957. This is the best opportunity for the people to rise up and change the system.

“If it is really clean and democratic before the election, it is certain Barisan Nasional will lose easily,” he said of polls that the opposition has insisted must only come after electoral reforms currently being discussed by a parliamentary select committee.

Anwar said this when closing PKR’s national congress here, likely to be its last before a crucial election expected soon.

He led an electoral pact with DAP and PAS in 2008 which made record gains, denying Barisan Nasional (BN) its customary two-thirds majority of Parliament after a record 82 opposition MPs were elected.

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