

Anwar: Pakatan has identified my replacement
The Malaysian Insider
January 04, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 4 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has decided who will lead the pact if he is found guilty next week of sodomy charges and jailed ahead of a general election expected this year.

The de facto PR leader did not, however, name his replacement in an interview today with US business news service Bloomberg.

“We have prepared the groundwork for a manifesto for Pakatan Rakyat and we are now in the final stages,” Anwar told Bloomberg in the interview.

“We have decided on the leadership during elections or post-elections in the event I’m imprisoned.”

Anwar said this was part of PR’s contingency plans if he were to go to jail again.

The High Court here will deliver its verdict in Anwar’s second sodomy trial on January 9.

Anwar faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted of sodomising his former aide.

Yesterday, the PR leadership also said it was prepared in the event Anwar is jailed next week.

“The Pakatan leadership, not only me and (Datuk Seri Dr Wan) Azizah (Wan Ismail) but Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and Lim Kit Siang have discussed scenarios...If I am jailed, involved in accident or shot, we are prepared, discussed various possibilities, scenario one, two, three,” Anwar had told reporters here yesterday.

An analyst quoted by Bloomberg in its report today suggested PR parties would benefit at the ballot box if Anwar is convicted.

“There may be an immediate swing towards him and his party” if Anwar is convicted, said Ibrahim Suffian, a political analyst at Kuala Lumpur-based Merdeka Center for Opinion Research.

“If Najib takes some months before calling an election, this opens up room for weaknesses in the opposition coalition to surface and any differences in opinion to be exploited.”

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