

Pakatan to maintain seat allocation in Penang
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By Opalyn Mok

GEORGE TOWN, Oct 19 — The electoral seat distribution for Pakatan Rakyat (PR) parties in Penang has been finalised and will remain status quo as in the 2008 general election.

“We have completed discussions with DAP on the seat distribution and are now finalising one or two seats with PAS,” said PR and PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar, who was in Penang to discuss the seat distribution, said all three parties have finalised and agreed on the seat distribution for the upcoming general election.

“Now, we have only left the one seat to finalise with PAS as the state seat in contention could be a PKR or DAP seat,” he said.

He said he has no problems in accepting the DAP as the party to helm Penang as in other states, Kedah was helmed by PAS while Selangor was helmed by PKR.

“I have no problem with a chief minister from DAP. It is due to the spectacular performance of Penang that I am proud to be from Penang and to be an MP here,” he said.

He said the DAP has never portrayed itself as a non-Malay party and in the past, the party has fielded Malay candidates in certain seats.

“This is nothing new,” said Anwar, who is also the Permatang Pauh MP and the opposition leader in Parliament.

He said the final decision on the candidacy for each seat will depend on the leadership of each respective party.

“I do not interfere with other parties’ decisions although we do keep each other updated on the candidates list,” he said.

He said only one PR candidate will contest each seat.

In the 2008 general election, PKR contested four parliamentary and 16 state seats, DAP contested seven parliamentary and 19 state seats while PAS contested two parliamentary and five state seats in Penang.

Commending Penang’s good performance as recorded by the Auditor-General’s Report, Anwar said Penang has done exceptionally well.

“No Barisan Nasional state can compete or even come close to the stellar performance of Penang,” he said.

He said he had to personally come to Penang to congratulate the state government on its stellar performance other than to discuss party matters.

"Penang's performance in terms of governance, development, investment and financial management is something to be proud of," he said.

"There have been claims by the Barisan Nasional that the Malays here have been sidelined so I have talked with Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng on this issue," he said.

He said those allegations were not true especially the recent furore surrounding the Bumiputra Housing Trust Fund.

"Normally, a state government's role is to only assist the federal government in approving affordable and low-cost housing projects while the federal government is wholly responsible for building these projects," he said.

He said it was the federal government that had sidelined Penang as there was no affordable housing project here by the federal government.

"Since the federal government failed to build affordable housing here, Penang is the first state government to allocate RM500,000 to build affordable housing," he said.

He said the affordable housing was for everyone of all races but a large portion of the units are meant for Bumiputeras.

"So, kudos to Penang for doing such a good job in governance and financial management," he said.

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