

**Pakatan has momentum but future may not be Anwar's, says The Economist  
Malaysian Insider  
May 31, 2013**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 31 — While the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition has momentum from a good showing in Election 2013, the pact may not include a future with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as its leader, The Economist said in its latest issue today.

Denied entry to Putrajaya this round, the prospects for the three-party alliance to win in the near future is bright as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is also facing bigger obstacles in pushing for “national reconciliation” in the wake of the divisive May 5 polls besides carrying out much-needed economic reforms and battling creeping corruption, the widely-read international news and current affairs weekly said in its June 1 edition available online now.

“Pakatan has the momentum. Mr Anwar, however, is 65,” The Economist said in its Banyan piece headlined “Time on whose side?”

“The future is not theirs; it's ours,” the weekly cited the DAP's Lim Guan Eng as saying, of the pact's hopes, but added its own observation, “But it is not necessarily Mr Anwar's.”

PR, which won 51 per cent of the popular vote, bagged 89 seats — seven more than it won in Election 2008 — in the 222-member Dewan Rakyat against the 13-party Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition's 133 seats.

The Economist noted the Anwar appears to be in a hurry to reach the peak of Malaysian politics, which had eluded him for a decade-and-a-half starting from when he was deputy to Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad until his sacking from government in the late 1990s over sodomy— which was later overturned — and corruption charges to now.

It noted further the opposition's campaign to challenge the results of the 13th general election the pact has claimed to be tainted by fraud and gerrymandering, both through formal petitions and by the series of nationwide rallies post-polls that Anwar has maintained must go on, but which The Economist said would likely come to naught.

PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli said last Monday that PR parties plan to file election petitions in 41 out of 222 federal constituencies — three by the DAP, 20 by PKR and 18 by PAS — before the June 12 deadline, as he showed the press evidence of phantom voters and blackouts during the May 5 general election.

“For all that, it seems likely that the protests will eventually peter out and that Pakatan will have to knuckle down to another stint in opposition.

“Whether the next election will be fairer is another matter,” the weekly said.

Instead, it noted that Malaysia's shifting political landscape was now driven by the young and city-dwellers — many who had backed PR and displayed a high-level of political consciousness and skill in using social media to share their beliefs.

The weekly also observed that the opposition pact's three partners PKR, PAS and the DAP espouse strong views on certain matters that have created friction, adding that the BN may

"may try to split Pakatan, by tempting the DAP or PAS, or both, into the government".

"Mr Anwar says that, since the election, Barisan has already been trying to woo him," The Economist reported, alluding to a secret agreement between the PKR man and his political foe Najib, brokered by their mutual friend, Indonesia's Jusuf Kalla, that was recently exposed but which has since been reported to have fallen through.

However, the weekly said reconciliation of any sort "seems distant", which it attributed to Najib's larger pile of problems compared to whatever the opposition pact may be facing.

"Unusually for a victorious incumbent, he argues for a change in 'our attitude, strategy, programmes and approach'," The Economist said.

The 59-year-old sought to win a personal mandate to shore up his prime ministership in the general election, which he got by dint of his position as Umno chief, The Economist said.

It added that Najib was currently occupied with the Malay party's election due year end, which he must overcome to defend his presidency and if he hopes to push through necessary reforms to secure the country's economic future.

It also noted that the BN's components had floated the "radical" idea to turn the race-based coalition into a single, multiracial party following their battering at the polls that Najib would have to deal with.

In addition, Najib must battle corruption, which the weekly viewed as the single biggest reason for the ruling coalition's dwindling popularity, noting that it meant "changing the system".

"The system will resist," The Economist said.

Umno hardliners may make it tough for Najib to carry out his reform plans, especially proposals to dismantle the decades-old affirmative pro-Malay and Bumiputera action policies, the weekly said, but added that he is likely to survive due to the "lack of an alternative", citing retired PM Dr Mahathir who still wields influence within Umno.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pakatan-has-momentum-but-future-may-not-be-anwars-says-the-economist/>