

Umno veep says talks with Anwar "a waste of time"
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Any dialogue with Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is a "waste of time", said Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Shafie Afdal today.

Shafie stressed the government did not need to entertain any offers made by Anwar since the elections are over, adding that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government should instead focus on ruling the country after receiving its mandate on May 5, 2013.

"The election is over, we do not need to give him a platform. What is important now is for us to continue building the country, to unite the people," Shafie said this morning after attending the launch of the Rural Entrepreneurs Carnival 2013 in Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya.

"My view is that it is a waste of time to have any dialogue with Anwar," added Shafie.

Anwar had in his recent Merdeka Day address signalled his readiness to meet Putrajaya over several issues for the sake of the nation's well-being and future.

"The meeting between both sides must be held immediately to save Malaysia," he had said in a press conference at the PKR headquarters in Petaling Jaya last week.

Anwar said although Pakatan Rakyat won the popular vote, it is ready to overlook the errors and mistakes of the Election Commission.

He added that the topics to be covered in any discussion must include racial and religious issues that had caused tension recently.

Other pressing issues include the slowing down of the nation's economy and the rising crime rate, which was worrying the public both in the urban and rural areas.

"Pakatan Rakyat's willingness to invite Barisan Nasional to the negotiation table is not about forming a unified government but also an act commonly adopted by democratic governments," he had said.

Besides Shafie, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar also rejected the offer to hold a dialogue and viewed it as a desperate move by the opposition leader.

Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir also questioned Anwar's motive to push for discussions between the opposing political coalitions.

Last week, another Umno vice-president, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, said Anwar's offer was discussed at the party's Supreme Council meeting but only Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is qualified to make an announcement. - September 2, 2013.

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