

In deriding Anwar, Daim shows Umno fear of losing Putrajaya sooner than later
Malaysian Insider
Feb 26, 2014
OLEH THE MALAYSIA INSIDER

So why is Tun Daim Zainuddin quaking?

Make no mistake, the former finance minister is worried. Worried enough that he keeps talking incessantly about Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Publicly, he dismisses the PKR de facto leader as a publicity hound, a man who craves the limelight and loves the next headline.

Publicly, he runs the opposition leader down as someone who has never been able to solve any problem.

Publicly, he says that Anwar's move to contest a by-election in Kajang is a complete waste of public funds.

Apparently Daim's fixation with Anwar continues in private discussions but behind closed doors, the tone is less dismissive, less condescending.

Those in his circle say he speaks with some concern over the consequences of an Anwar victory in Kajang; chiefly the real possibility of Anwar being the chief executive of the richest state in Malaysia with several billion ringgit at his disposal and the immediate impact on the morale of Umno members in Selangor and then around the country.

Left unsaid is the fear that with a strong economic base and a platform to showcase stronger leadership qualities than the incumbent in Putrajaya, a rejuvenated and focused Anwar could lead Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to defeat Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general elections - an end result could prove particularly uncomfortable for Daim, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other Umno leaders from the glory days of privatisation and excess.

After all, Selangor is the country's richest and most-industrialised state and next to it is Kuala Lumpur, which make them rich pickings for infrastructure projects, property deals and business for cronies and others connected to Putrajaya.

It would be in the interest of the few who have benefited in the past to ensure Selangor returns to the Barisan Nasional fold.

Anwar leading the state would make that a remote possibility for the near future and turn Selangor into another political fortress like Kelantan is for PAS.

To put it simply, there is a need to protect the golden goose.

And Umno-linked tycoons will go all out to prevent Anwar from taking over as menteri besar.

So do not be surprised if Daim takes more than a cursory interest in how Umno/BN are preparing for battle against Anwar.

It would be in the interest of the old guard of the Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad era if the current Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim does not vacate his position or at least drags out the whole process.

And let's be clear, their disdain about the "Kajang move" has little to do with the use of public funds for a by-election.

Because if they were truly concerned about how taxpayers money is spent, they would not have allowed the one-sided toll concessions or sweet deals for the independent power producers or keep water resources in the hands of a few connected businessmen.

The battle for Kajang then, is really the battle over who gets to control Putrajaya in the nearest future.

An Anwar win in Kajang could lead to Umno losing the federal government sooner than later.

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Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/in-deriding-anwar-daim-shows-umno-fear-of-losing-putrajaya-sooner-than-late>