

Anwar must listen to own advice

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has to start listening to his own advice if he wants to solve PKR's internal problems and constant speculation of defections.

"The recent experience is a lesson and the party must ensure its struggle is not sacrificed for a narrow agenda," the opposition icon wrote in his weblog yesterday, referring to the scramble among allies for the Bukit Selambau state seat in Kedah.

True. And not just for Bukit Selambau but for the entire party that looks up to him as the de facto leader.

He has to realise that the "band-aid" approach will not work any longer, that you cannot just patch up the troubled parts and the party will creak on to victory.

Eleven months after the historic and unprecedented opposition victory that denied Barisan Nasional its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority and control of four states, Anwar and his party is at a critical moment.

His Pakatan Rakyat coalition has lost one state through defections and rumours of crossovers continue to make their rounds until state PKR chiefs have to hold meetings to confirm fealty and fidelity.

Anwar has to drop the narrow agenda of forming the federal government, to use his own words, "by hook or crook" and defections, and focus on the nitty-gritty of consolidating his own party into a viable and sustainable force.

At stake is his reputation as the unifier of the opposition, the glue that holds three disparate parties together and the architect of a two-party political system after 50 years of independence.

No one else has been able to shake Barisan Nasional like Anwar but that could all go down the drain if he believes "the ends justifies the means" while seeing his party fray at the edges and turn believers into disbelievers.

In the Perak crisis, two PKR lawmakers made the jump, with a double-hop by his varsity mate, Datuk Nasharudin Hashim from Umno, who began the circus of crossovers. One DAP state legislator followed, leaving Pas as the only party that has kept the faith and impervious to the business of defecting.

In Kedah, one PKR lawmaker has quit both seat and post, mired in personal problems and accused of not performing public service.

In Selangor, party leader Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim had to meet all the Pakatan Rakyat assemblymen and MPs to consolidate the party amid rumours of disputes and defections.

These simmering problems have come to boil now for Anwar as political rivals in Umno sense he is

at a vulnerable moment and are going all out to paint him as the villain of the piece in the Perak imbroglio.

They also want to make him and DAP chairman Karpal Singh be seen as traitors and disloyal to the country's constitutional monarchy for disputing the Perak Sultan's decision to hand over the state government to Barisan Nasional instead of dissolving the state assembly.

At a time when the Malays, who are the dominant and majority race in the country, are split about what happened in Perak, Umno is hoping to diminish Anwar's standing and recoup its losses from the last general election and by-elections.

Anwar must know that and bringing in the first-aid box and a packet of band-aids is not the solution to his party's ailments.

Like the country's economy, PKR needs structural and far-reaching changes, not just spit and plaster.

P.S.

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