

Anwar increases attacks on Najib
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Beh Lih Yi

Believe it or not - Anwar Ibrahim is now anxiously waiting to be sued!

And he is hoping that Najib Abdul Razak would take the initiative as this would enable him to expose more in court of what he knows about the Mongolian murder case.

Last night, the opposition icon continued his attack on Najib by 'inviting' the deputy premier to initiate a lawsuit against him for linking the latter to the murder case of a Mongolian national.

"I prefer him (Najib) to sue me because I can go to court then and speak more about the matter," Anwar told a crowd of about 400 at a dinner in Ijok - where a by-election is being held.

His challenge was made in the wake of Najib's statement on Thursday that the deputy premier has no plan to take Anwar to court for the time being over the allegation.

Najib had said: "I don't have to sue him. I have the option to sue him but what's important is to let the law take its course."

'I know Najib too well'

Anwar, the PKR advisor, has repeatedly drawn Najib's name into the gruesome murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu.

The Mongolian national, aged 28, was murdered and her body was blown to bits with a powerful plastic explosive at a secondary forest near the Subang Dam at Puncak Alam, Shah Alam last October.

Two officers from a police elite unit have been charged with murder while a think-tanker closely linked to Najib has been charged with abetting them.

At the dinner last night, Anwar also claimed he knew Najib "too well".

He then asked the crowd whether they want to know more government scandals, to which the audience replied with a loud "yes".

But Anwar responded in Mandarin: "Man Man (slowly), we still have the general election to come. In Ijok, we reveal bit by bit."

Apart from the murder case, Anwar also raised the language-switch policy in the teaching of Science and Maths and the need to do away with the New Economic Policy in his speech.

PKR is fielding its national treasurer Khalid Ibrahim against BN's K Parthiban, who is the Tanjung Karang MIC division secretary, in the April 28 by-election.

'Nothing to do with me'

Commenting on this matter today, Najib said the opposition was raising non-issues in their election campaigns.

As such, he added, they were talking about matters that did not relate to the people of Ijok.

"What is the relationship between the Mongolian woman and the people of Ijok? There is no relationship, it has nothing to do with me too," Najib told reporters after opening a new annex to the SRJK (Tamil) Bestari Jaya in Batang Berjuntai.

"It has nothing to do with me, yet it is being raised up here as an election issue," he added.

Najib also said that the opposition was incapable of championing the cause of the estate workers.

He added that Khalid had always been "at top" and had no inkling of the woes faced by the estate workers.

"Who knows better about the problems of the estate workers other than people who were born in the estate such as Parthiban?" he said.

DAP, PAS join in campaign

DAP leaders Teresa Kok, Ronnie Liu and Ean Yong Hian Hwa were also present at the dinner in support of the PKR candidate.

The event, hosted by PKR at a Chinese restaurant, attracted more than 200 people who showed up after the party handed out dinner coupons during their house-to-house visits earlier.

Another 200 - a mixture of Malay and Chinese crowd - followed the opposition leaders' speeches outside the restaurant. There were few Indians among the crowd.

After the dinner, Anwar proceeded to two ceramahs held at Batang Berjuntai and Kampung Jaya Setia which also featured PAS leaders Dr Hasan Ali and Dr Hatta Ramli.

About 500 people turned up at the ceramah in Kampung Jaya Setia, a Malay-majority polling district believed to be PKR stronghold.

In the 2004 general election, PKR secured 41 votes more than the BN in the area.

Anwar's speech, punctuated with Quranic verses, appealed to the locals to defend Jaya Setia as a "fort of the people's struggle".

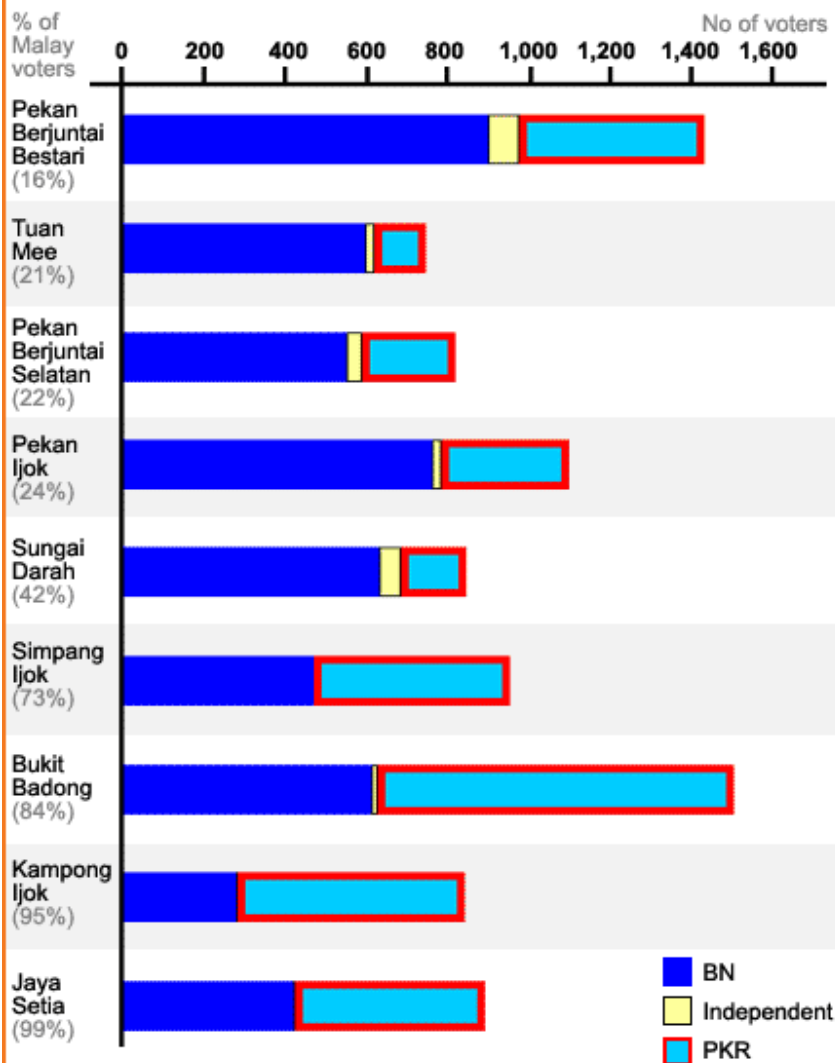
However, despite the considerably good turnout at the ceramah, most of those in the crowd were not locals and this has caused some worry to the party.

Out of 10 people malaysiakini approached last night, only two confirmed they are locals while the others came from Kuala Lumpur, Klang and Seremban.

Ijok's political landscape

The state seat of Ijok has two major towns – Ijok and Berjuntai Bestari (formerly known as Batang Berjuntai), and is surrounded by kampongs and plantation housing communities. 95% of Chinese voters are in the two major towns. The bulk of the Malay voters are in areas around Ijok town, Jaya Setia and Bukit Badong. Most of the Indian voters are around Berjuntai Bestari and in the voting districts of Tuan Mee and Sungai Darah.

In 2004, BN won the seat by winning in non-Malay voting districts in Berjuntai Bestari, Tuan Mee, Pekan Ijok and Sungai Darah. PKR won convincingly in the two Malay areas of Bukit Badong and Kampong Ijok and took half the vote in Simpang Ijok and Jaya Setia.



Azlan Zamhari / Malaysiakini