

## **Jailed or free, Anwar remains Najib's cudgel**

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YOURSAY 'Either way, it will cost BN votes. If the opposition leader is jailed, a lot of fence sitters will vote Pakatan Rakyat...'

UK's Guardian predicts Anwar's conviction

your sayFaz: The writing is on the wall and everywhere - Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim is going to jail. This will tie in well with Peaceful Assembly Bill where protesters need police permits and street demonstrations are illegal.

But Anwar is not the lone opposition to Umno-BN. We, the thinking Malaysians, are. There are other opposition leaders who can take up the cudgel with the jailed Anwar providing the moral spark.

What we need is a 'catch phrase' in the build-up to GE13. Perhaps ABU (Asalkan Bukan Umno or Anything But Umno) will do the trick.

Jesse: In a neighbouring country, it used to be that if you want a favourable verdict, you were advised to go and buy a judge. Malaysia's judiciary has slowly descended towards that same level in the past couple of decades.

They are not the guardians of the rule of law or the constitution but a tool of the government. It is unlikely that Anwar will get his fair day in court. The verdict is predictable.

I am afraid he is truly heading for the slammer even though Sodomy II is such a weak case and full of holes. It would have been thrown out at the preliminary stage in a proper judicial trial.

Freedom7: This will be PM Najib Razak's nightmare - Anwar in jail or free, both will cost BN votes.

If Anwar is jailed, then a lot of fence sitters will vote Pakatan Rakyat. Anwar's wife and daughter will become heroes, like Burma's Aung San Syu Kyi.

Nil: The jailing of Anwar will be the boomerang required to hit Umno-BN hard on the head to knock it out.

Antibody: But Anwar is not the only man in the world who can topple the BN, I am sure of that. We have PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, Kita chief Zaid Ibrahim, and a few others we shall not mention here.

PKR will continue so long as there is the desire to make Malaysia a Malaysian Malaysia and not a Melayu Malaysia.

I forecast that with the conviction of Anwar, Pakatan will make deeper inroads into the public's psyche. Properly strategised, Pakatan can win big.

Ferdtan: From day one, we knew that Anwar would be found guilty of the trumped-up charges of sodomy. We are only afraid that the judge, when finding him guilty, will also not allow him bail while on appeal.

That will prevent Anwar from physically campaigning in the coming GE. That is how cruel we believe the Malaysian court can be.

Najib forgets that unlike his expensive wife, Anwar's Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail is respected and she will get a lot of sympathy. Najib, if you put DSAI in jail, people will hate you.

By the way, you have a minister who 'sapu' RM250 million. Why no action?

Change Agent: We expect DSAI (Anwar) to be found guilty but the BN-controlled court will not take the risk to jail him. The strategy to remove him has not been a wise one, and his enemies know it.

But political history will prove that whatever the outcome, the damage has been done - Najib's credibility has gone down the drain. We will expect further delay in sentencing till GE13 is over.

Good men: I do not think they will jail Anwar, they are well aware of the possible consequences. The last thing that Umno wants is to make him a martyr a second time.

My prediction: Dismissal not amounting to acquittal. That means they can still use it as a campaign tool to say he did actually do the dirty deeds, but there was just not quite enough evidence for conviction.

They can then trumpet the fairness of the courts, while at the same time still tarnish Anwar with sodomy. Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian and all the other pseudo news media will do the required blitzkrieg for the BN.

Passing Cloud: If we listen carefully to the ground, Najib - and Umno-BN - are finished whether Anwar is found guilty, jailed or not jailed. The people's seething anger is too strong and too palpable to ignore. Prepare the obituary.

Changeagent: Simon Tidall from UK's Guardian has provided a very good analysis of the political situation surrounding Anwar's trumped-up sodomy charges.

My only criticism is that it has failed to recognise Mahathir as the real culprit and mastermind behind the scenes. He is, after all, the orchestrator of the original sodomy fiasco. Najib is merely one of the chess pawns played by the master.

Swipenter: For Najib, it is a Hobson's choice. The international and local perception was that Anwar was falsely charged in court for sodomy, considering the way the trial was unfairly conducted. Either way, it won't be pretty for Najib.

The Umno warlords and the right-wingers won't be happy with a 'not guilty' verdict. Here, the problem with Najib is that his position as PM is beholden to them.

Likewise, a 'guilty' verdict would set another wave of reformasi in the streets and ballot box as well as "severely hurting Malaysia's reputation in terms of democracy internationally".

If the recently concluded Umno annual general meeting is anything to go by, Najib is more interested in his own survival by the showing of his 'ultra-Malay' face.

Milosevic: The whole persecution of Anwar was to defang the opposition.

Whether the philosophy of PKR and PAS is truly democratic and founded on universal justice remains to be seen, but their gaining strength, along with the DAP, is vital for the country's democratisation process.

Umno has been decaying as a party - it is becoming a version of the Mubarak and Mugabe regimes. But with a more educated population and a long-standing opposition, the chances for a smooth and effective opposition takeover are compelling, unlike the factionalism and uncertainty of the post-Libya and post-Egypt politics.

In fact, the sodomy trial has backfired - imprisonment will incense the population, but a guilty or acquittal verdict will not yield political benefits. We are too inured.

Whatever Anwar did or did not do is irrelevant to public morality. I wish he had defended liberalism more

strongly, given what he has been through, instead of toying with hudud. But he has definitely been persecuted.

Paul Warren: Between Malaysia's reputation and winning the next general election, which is more important for Umno?

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