

**Anwar will review 'archaic' Section 377 if he's PM**  
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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has made it clear that the country's law on sodomy, which has been used to smear certain individuals, will be reviewed once he comes into power.

He said Sections 377B and 377C of the Penal Code "are archaic and have frequently been used to attack political foes".

azlan"People asked me whether I will review the laws. Yes, I will (review), to make sure it does not meant to insult people," the Permatang Pauh MP told some 200 supporters at a thanksgiving prayer ceremony at his house last night.

He said evidence could easily be fabricated under the current interpretation of the two sections of the Penal Code, and he "makes no apology about archaic law".

"Did I mention Islamic law, syariah laws? Did I say I will defend sodomy? No, I am saying the existing law.

"Any ustaz (religious teacher) who safeguards these two sections is dumb," he said in a rousing tone.

Sections 377B and 377C state that whoever commits carnal intercourse against the order of nature, with or without consent, shall be punished with imprisonment up to a maximum of 20 years.

Controversial BBC interview

Anwar is now in the centre of a fresh controversy, after telling BBC in an interview that he would review "archaic laws", when asked by the host about his readiness to to take "the idea of anti- discrimination as far as gay rights".

Umno-owned dailies Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia zeroed-in on the issue, implying that Anwar was now supporting gay rights.

On Tuesday, PKR defended Anwar, pointing out that he had actually called for a review of unIslamic laws on the issue.

The party religious bureau chief, Ahmad Kassim, said Anwar had expressed commitment to heterosexual marriage and reinforced Pakatan Rakyat's stance that it would not legalise homosexuality.

"If we study Anwar's answer, it was clear he did not mention any wish to legalise homosexuality in the country," the Kuala Kedah MP said.

NONE

Anwar told the crowd last night that an individual's personal orientation expressed in private places should be outside the law.

"But I made it clear that (homosexuality) should not be allowed in the public domain," he said.

The opposition leader's house in the tranquil Segambut Dalam locality was yesterday packed with 200 supporters attending the thanksgiving to mark his vindication in the two-year-long Sodomy II trial.

The supporters, many of whom donned white songkok, performed a total of four prayers in the living

room, with Anwar seated in the centre of the crowd.

Also present were NGO Amanah deputy president Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, PKR information chief Muhammad Nor Manuty and PKR treasurer William Leong.

Touching on the Sodomy II verdict, Anwar said the surprising judgment might come from the trial judge himself.

"That's why he finished reading (the verdict) in three minutes.... Court proceedings lasted nearly three years, but verdict took just three minutes," he jeered.

Possibly gov't did not expect outcome

He said the reaction of the "government's media" on in the aftermath of the verdict also showed that the authorities might not have expected the outcome.

NONEHis 45-minute speech was fittingly titled "The importance of confidence".

In life, Anwar said, there would always be a time when "someone feels a challenge is too huge to overcome, and giving up seems to be the easier option".

The Prophet Muhammad, too, he said, was puzzled by the series of obstacles before his triumph.

"As a human being, the larger role you play, the more challenges you will face," he said.

Anwar's speech ended with a loud chant of "takbir" and the Ishak prayers.

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