

Anwar booed and jeered outside nomination centre

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By Susan Loone

Permatang Pauh candidate Anwar Ibrahim was "humiliated" by over-enthusiastic BN supporters even as he is contesting in his home state, where he has been an MP since 1982.

They booed and jeered each mention of his name and party by Election Commission returning officer Yusni Ismail at the Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara in Berapit.

Yusni confirmed all candidates for the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seats, and state ones under the constituency: Seberang Jaya, Permatang Pasir and Penanti at about 11.30am.

"Boo! Pungkok (backside)," they repeated loudly accompanied by jeers when Anwar (left) and his fellow candidates' names were called out to confirm their nomination.

Anwar and his colleagues - Dr Afiff Bahardin (Seberang Jaya), Norlela Ariffin (Penanti) and Salleh Man (Permatang Pasir) filed their papers at around 9.20am.

Anwar will be facing former Telekom Malaysia director Mazlan Ismail, in a three-cornered fight with Dr Abdullah Zawawi Shamsuddin.

Afiff, who is state PKR Youth chief, will be clashing with Umno's Muhammad Nasir Abdullah, against independent candidate Samsut Tajreb. There will be straight fights in Penanti and Permatang Pauh.

Anwar supporters lose their cool

Earlier, Anwar's over-protective supporters almost burst through the barricades separating the crowd about 100 metres from the entrance to the nomination centre.

They were forcefully stopped by policemen, although they shouted "PM (Anwar) mesti mesra rakyat (must be people-friendly)".

For two and a half hours, supporters from both the political divide noisily and enthusiastically shouted their party slogans and sang their respective inspirational songs.

The BN lot repeatedly sang the patriotic 'Inilah Barisan Kita' song, while Anwar's shouted "reformasi" and had fun asking "are you ready for BN?" to a resounding "No" .

When asked whether he endorses gutter politics, such as those revealed by his supporters, Mazlan said: "No, there is no need for that".

"We are mature enough and do not have to resort to political attacks against personalities ," he told reporters.

Mazlan is confident of defeating Anwar, saying he hopes to defeat the PKR supremo with a large majority. "We will work hard and we will pray for it".

Independents' impact waved off

On whether he is afraid to meet his opponent, Anwar dismissed it, saying "not at all".

Before entering the nomination centre, Anwar was asked on the impact of the large number of independent candidates making their appearance in this election.

"It would probably have an impact on one or two seats but not all. This is a battle mostly between BN and Pakatan," he told reporters.

"There is much interest in this polls because we are not forming an opposition coalition, but a government that can take over Putrajaya," he added.

He does not think the independents can split Pakatan's votes, saying "BN and Pakatan have their own strengths".

All the while, about 50 federal reserve units personnel stood guard on each side to maintain peace and order and to control the crowd.