

**Anwar: I'm sad for Malaysia**  
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"I am sad for Malaysia."

So said former deputy premier and PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim in response to his party's defeat in the Ijok by-election.

"I have been talking about the fraudulent process all the while but I did not think it was going to be so bad ... intimidation and blatant bribery ... the whole conduct of the election today," he said.

Top Keadilan leaders were absent when the results were announced. Anwar said the by-election was ridden with phantom voters and police harassment against the opposition.

"We will launch an official protest on a charge of fraudulent conduct of the election," he said.

However Election Commission secretary Kamaruzaman Mohamad Nor had earlier dismissed the opposition's allegations.

"There are no phantom voters," he said. "You have to follow our (electoral) list," he said.

"The confusion arised because they used another electoral list," he added, referring to the commission's official list of voters.

The ruling coalition has fended off a spirited opposition campaign led by Anwar to retain the semi-rural Ijok seat in Selangor with an increased majority.

K Parthiban, from BN's MIC polled 5,884 votes while PKR's candidate Abdul Khalid Ibrahim secured 4,034.

The BN increased its majority by 210 from the last 2004 general elections in the state. A total of 10,049 voters or 81.9 percent of the electorate cast ballots, a record turnout for the constituency.

### **Only BN can help with development**

Although not contesting, Anwar has thrown his weight behind the opposition candidate in a bitter and gruelling campaign against the powerful ruling national front coalition led by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The weekend poll was widely touted as a litmus test of popularity for both sides ahead of a general election expected before 2009.

Polls opened amid tight security at 8am as voters lined up at nine polling stations in the tiny constituency.

An ethnic Indian construction worker, E Elango, 52, said he backed the ruling coalition as it could bring development to the sleepy town.

"It (the BN) can help the people with infrastructure development. The opposition cannot bring any development," he said.

Annuar Musa, BN chief in Kelantan said the Malay-majority areas of Ijok traditionally supported the opposition.

"The previous Barisan Nasional candidate did not meet the expectations of the voters," Annuar said, referring to former state lawmaker K Sivalingam, whose death earlier this month precipitated the by-election.

"Anwar is not a factor in this election. He can be in politics but it's not a threat to the government," Annuar said.

Reflecting on the party's loss, Anwar said he remained optimistic of the people's support for PKR.

"It is a very good turning point as I was able to articulate our views but we are dealing with a dirty process here," Anwar said.

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