

Anwar claims moral victory in Ijok
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Former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim declared the Ijok by-election a moral victory for Parti Keadilan Rakyat in a efficacious fiery speech last night that rallied party workers for the impending general election.

With pointed wit and sarcasm, Anwar appeared angered at times when he spoke of the wholesale stratagem that the Barisan Nasional employed to win Ijok.

On Saturday, the BN ruling government won 58 percent of the votes, over PKR's 40 percent, trumping the opposition party with a 1,850 majority. Allegations of vote buying, phantom voting and intimidation by the police and party workers were levelled at the government.

Anwar, quoting DAP leader Lim Kit Siang, declared that the BN has spent "nearly RM100 million to win 201 extra votes," referring to the slight majority increase compared to the 2004 election.

"There is no sense of decency in them. Every dirty tactic was used," he told a crowd of at least 500 who gathered at the PAS headquarters near Pekan Ijok.

Anwar also spoke at length on the fracas that broke out between youth members of Umno and the Opposition.

During last week's campaigning, three PAS party members from the Selangor branch were seriously injured after being beaten, allegedly, by Umno youth members. Two of the PAS members received multiple stiches to the head.

"There is no one here who believes in their heart that real action would be taken against these Umno youths for their barbaric behaviour," said Anwar.

"Ask the police and they would say, 'oh, they hit themselves on the head'," said Anwar sarcastically.

He said the police have acted in proxy for Umno, intimidating the crowds.

"At every Opposition ceramah, FRU units surround the crowds. When allegations of abuse by Umno youths are raised, the police are silent," he said.

Smear campaigns

He also spoke of the use of government-owned media in smear campaigns, referring to TV3's repeated broadcast of him jiggling to traditional Indian music while campaigning in Tuan Mee, estate.

"I have rhythm (laughs). Some politicians don't. I don't mind that they kept airing the video. I have suffered worse. This is the best that they can do now," he said.

"The question is, has the Barisan stooped so low that now this is all they can do? When

questions of (murdered Mongolian national) Altantuya, and vote buying allegations are unanswered, this is what TV3 can do?" he said.

He sarcastically quoted articles from mainstream newspapers, which he said was part of a government effort to smear Opposition parties.

Referring to the article by New Straits Times and Berita Harian that Umno has closed its doors to him, he said to the laughter of the crowds, "Who wants to join in the first place?"

"When have I ever applied? I have told people, from the ones up high and the ones down below that I have never approached Umno, or negotiated some sort of return.

"A Berita Harian reporter approached me today and asked me to respond [to the closure] ... I told him in two sentences ... I am not interested. I never applied. We'll see Berita Harian's response today."

He added that if had returned to Umno, it "would be [deputy prime minister] Najib's [Razak] biggest fear. And [Umno youth chief] Hishammuddin [Hussein Onn] would be crying."

Anwar said in the midst of the campaigning, "pertinent questions" remained unanswered by the ruling government.

"Questions of illegally obtained shares ... of commissions ... of blatant corruption amounting to the hundreds of millions and billions are unanswered."

"The questions of the murder ... a person has been killed ... obliterated by explosives, C4 explosives, only found within the Ministry of Defence. These are very serious issues, but they went unanswered. Instead they use smear tactics of the lowest kind."

Thanking the Chinese voters

He said pamphlets were circulated during the campaign calling him a "Jewish agent" and that he would "sell out to China."

"And they accused us of personal attacks!?" exclaimed Anwar.

"They have attacked in such a manner, because that is all they can do now. If they had something against me, evidence that I had obtained shares or wealth illegally, don't you think they would have used it long ago?"

"They are afraid. They are afraid of the Opposition now, because for once, we are united. We are united in our stand against corruption and race politics," he said.

Anwar also took the opportunity to thank the Chinese voters. Yesterday, MCA president Ong Ka Ting acknowledged that there was at least a 20 percent swing within the Chinese communities in Ijok.

"We owe much to our Chinese brethren, to DAP, for they have [delivered]. Even now, the taukehs are telling us 'this cannot be. (BN victory) if not for the hantu hantus, you would have won'"

On the future of the country's politics, Anwar said only the Opposition can offer a viable future

for its citizens.

He said PKR's openness to all races and religions should be the tenet of mainstream politics.

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