

Anwar dismisses Utusan's warnings of 'war'
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has dismissed Utusan Malaysia's dire warning of an imminent "large-scale war", should the government fail to address alleged racial tension, as nothing more than an attempt to pull wool over the people's eyes.

He told a press conference at the PKR headquarters in Tropicana, Petaling Jaya, today, "I don't really want to entertain Utusan," and went on to describe the Malay daily's provocative prediction as "the last gasp of a dying regime" rapidly losing the support of the rakyat.

NONE "They make such threats because they want to cover up the corruption and oppressiveness (of the government).

"The tension (between the races, if any) is not as serious as they say it is," Anwar added.

Anwar (left) was commenting on an op-ed piece by Zaini Hassan in the Malay daily today titled Benar, 'perang besar' boleh berlaku di Malaysia (It's true, a 'large-scale war' can take place in Malaysia).

In the article, Zaini declared that a war that will dwarf what occurred on May 13, 1969 "is imminent if the government does nothing to curb racial tension caused by those who continue to stoke racial fires".

Harussani Zakaria The article linked this to allegations by Perak mufti Harussani Zakaria (right), frontpaged by Utusan yesterday, of the existence of an alternate constitution being drafted to replace the current one, and erasing the special rights of the Malays and the position of Islam as the official religion.

On that issue, Anwar challenged those making the allegations to prove it.

"If it is true, (let the police) investigate it. If such a thing exists, if it goes against the aspirations of the people. Action can be taken," said the Permatang Pauh MP.

Taking Utusan to task

In a related matter, PKR information chief Latheefa Koya, who was also at the press conference, announced that Anwar would be taking legal action against the Malay daily.

"Anwar, through his lawyers, has sent a legal letter to Utusan on the claims it published in its report, Anwar bayar CNN."

pkw weekly pc 120707 latheefa She says Anwar has demanded that the daily retract its story and publish an official apology.

In addition, the retraction and apology is to be given the same space and prominence as Utusan's original article alleging that Anwar paid CNN to publish news about him.

The letter delivered to Utusan today gives the newspaper seven days to respond.

"If not we will sue them for defamation for RM50 million, considering the international implications of the claim," said Latheefa.

RM77 mil for Najib's image

Quizzed about Indera Mahkota parliamentarian Azan Ismail's claim that the Malaysian government is the largest client for PR firm Apco Worldwide, Anwar explained that the Malaysian government was one of the many clients serviced by the consultancy.

"However the Malaysian government, in trying to uplift Premier Najib Abdul Razak's image, paid out RM77 million, the highest in a single contract.

"I congratulate the Malaysian government for the accomplishment," sniped Anwar.

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