

**Re-election demanded in Bayan Baru PKR
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PKR Bayan Baru's Team Rakyat which lost badly in the division polls to Team Reformasi last Saturday has revealed 'seven irregularities' that allegedly marred the election, rendering it invalid.

It has also called for a re-election to be held within 14 days, failing which it may lodge a complaint with the Registrar of Societies.

Its election manager Annuar Ismail (*in yellow t-shirt*) said he does not rule out seeking the intervention of central and state leadership in the outcome. A total of 781 votes were cast out of 5,500 eligible members.

Team Rakyat is headed by former Bayan Baru MIC chief M Nyanasegaran, who joined PKR after the March 2008 general election.

Team Reformasi, which made a clean sweep at the divisional polls, is headed by Pantai Jerejak assemblyperson Sim Tze Tsin.

"In order to save certain leaders, our supporters were suppressed, provoked and slandered even before the polling. Due to seven factors, the results of the polls do not reflect reality," claimed Annuar.

He alleged that:

1. There were attempts by election monitor Hassan Ishak to disrupt the Team Rakyat *pondok panas* and shut it down, without reason or regulatory basis.
2. The polling hours had been extended, from 4pm to 5.30pm without prior notice to the annual general meeting held that day.
3. Team Rakyat supporters were not allowed to serve as polling agents - instead those from Team Reformasi were found guarding the polling table.
4. There were complaints of votes being rigged. For example, more ballot papers were allegedly distributed to Chinese voters, while Indian voters were 'mised' to vote for Sim due to illiteracy;
5. Additional ballot papers were created through photocopying.
6. The polling centre was 'closed' for 30 minutes, giving rise to suspicion that there was manipulation and removal of ballots from the boxes.
7. The low voter turnout was suspicious, as Team Rakyat brought along about 1,500 members.

Asked who could have influenced the result, Annuar said cryptically: "If Penang deputy chief minister I Mansor Othman (*left*) can win without contest, there would seem to be a *operasi selamatkan Adun* (save the state assemblyperson) going on."

However, Annuar refrained from blaming any particular leader or individual for the team's predicament.

'Independent monitors needed'

Nyanasegaran was present at the press conference, but did not comment on the matter. Also present was Ismail Ali, the assistant to Bayan Baru MP Zahrain Mohammed Hashim who had quit the party in February to turn Independent.

Contacted later by phone, Nyanasegaran vehemently denied he was ever backed by Zahrain (*right*), saying he had joined PKR of his own free will.

Annuar also said the team had submitted two letters of complaint to the election committee and lodged a police report on Sunday.

"Unfortunately, deputy secretary Sharifah Shahida was partial and turned a blind eye to the complaints," he alleged.

He proposed that representatives of NGOs, civil society organisations, DAP and PAS should be allowed to monitor the polls, which will see the nomination process completed by Sunday.

In an immediate response, Sim said the decision to extend the polling time was made with the agreement of Nyanasegaran and the election committee.

"This goes for the photostating of voting papers as we ran out of papers as well - we made decision together. I am surprised Team Rakyat claims it has no knowledge about this," he said.

Sim dismissed the allegations as "frustration of the losers" in the election and urged all members to back the winning team to continue the party's struggles.

"There are winners and losers in any competition. We have to respect the democratic process. Bayan Baru members have made an obvious decision as I received a solid mandate and a big majority that day," he added.

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