

No rigging : Anwar says PM 'lying'
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Beh Lih Yi

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's denial that the general election is not rigged is a lie, according to opposition stalwart Anwar Ibrahim. MCPX

anwar permatang pauh polling day 080308 mobbedThe PKR leader claimed that "massive rigging" is taking places and there is evidence to proof that it is prevalent.

"I am disgusted that the prime minister chose to deny there is any possibility of rigging," he told local and foreign journalists at Permatang Pauh this morning after casting his vote for the first time since the 1995 general election.

The charismatic leader was sacked as deputy premier in 1998 and jailed for six years over a corruption charge after a fallout with then premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Indelible ink reversal

Anwar was asked by a journalist to respond to Abdullah's statement made earlier today in Kepala Batas, where the BN chairperson is contesting.

As an example, the opposition leader cited the Election Commission's (EC) eleventh hour shock reversal of the decision to use indelible ink to prevent multiple voting.

anwar permatang pauh polling day 080308 familyHe accused Abdullah of instructing EC to do this after receiving disturbing reports.

"The decision to cancel the indelible ink was made after he received evidence from the intelligence and police that there is a 48 percent popularity votes that we (oppositions) have achieved.

"That (figure) was five days ago and it was increasing very fast," alleged Anwar.

Other cases he cited included a military personnel whose name allegedly appears 87 times on the electoral roll in two different constituencies and evidence that an Umno member was allegedly keeping 27 MyKads to carry out multiple voting.

Apart from that, he also claimed that there were 10 buses suspected of ferrying 'phantom' voters to Permatang Pauh, where his wife and PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail will be defending the party's sole seat.

Opposition's chances

Despite claims of election rigging, Anwar maintained his optimism that the opposition stands a chance to deny BN a two-thirds majority nationwide.

"I am very confident we have actually gone beyond the one-third (of seats) for the entire opposition. There is no way for any sound political observer to deny that the mood is with

us," he said.

The three main opposition parties - PAS, DAP and PKR - will have to win at least 75 of the 222 parliamentary seats being contested in this elections to deny the BN two-thirds majority.

anwar permatang pauh polling day 080308 anwarMeanwhile, Anwar also said that he was delighted for being able to participate in the electoral process after 13 years.

"I am equally glad that I am able to vote for Azizah," he said, referring to his wife who is defending the seat which was once Anwar's stronghold.

The couple arrived at the voting centre - the Penanti secondary school - at 10.45am and was greeted with chants of reformasi from supporters. They were accompanied by their second daughter Nurul Nuha.

Their eldest daughter Nurul Izzah is contesting for the Lembah Pantai parliamentary seat in Kuala Lumpur.

'I'm Anwar, the next PM'

Mobbed by journalists, Anwar, clad in a white shirt and dark slacks, while Wan Azizah donning a blue baju kurung, walked to the polling booth together.

Anwar was heard checking with an aide whether he brought his MyKad while his wife teased him that he is now in the "golden age category". Anwar voted at the first polling stream, usually reserved for the elderly.

Anwar is expected to be present at Permatang Pauh tonight when the election results are announced, according to Wan Azizah.

The PKR president also said that she was happy that her husband could accompany her this time around.

anwar permatang pauh polling day 080308 fansWan Azizah is facing Umno Youth leader and former Masjid Negara imam Pirdaus Ismail for the second time. Pirdaus lost by a 590-majority in the 2004 general election.

Both BN and the opposition supporters lined the roads with the temperature rising at times because of the sloganeering.

A PKR supporter, who wore an Anwar mask, shouted to passing motorists: "I am Anwar Ibrahim, the next prime minister. Vote for me, oil prices will go down tomorrow".