

Liwat-gate: Who wins, who loses
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In
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yesterday's podcast, we discussed the main actors who could be behind the latest attack campaign against de facto PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim. Today, we want to discuss the winners and losers as a result of this debacle.

It doesn't take a political analyst to conclude that a very large percentage of Malaysians do not believe the allegations made against Anwar. Most people would summarily dismiss this allegation as politically motivated, and for good reason.

It certainly comes at an 'opportune' time as the administration tries to come to grips with the continued speculation about Barisan Nasional MPs crossing over to Pakatan as well as containing the backlash from the petrol price hikes.

It's not like Pakatan Rakyat has been doing everything right either but those who may have been disappointed with the opposition coalition's shortcomings – like the failure to form a shadow cabinet, the failure of the Pakatan state governments in Penang and Kedah to coordinate on the water-catchment issue, the impatience of Anwar to form the next government – would now swing their sympathy back towards Pakatan or redirect their anger towards BN.

anwar saiful bukhari sodomy allegations turkish embassy release 300608 04More specifically, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will most definitely receive the brunt of the anger. Some may accuse him of playing a role in all this, especially the masses who might not watch politics very closely.

Others, even if they do not believe that he is responsible, will blame him for not taking a stronger stand in quashing these allegations and finding out who might be responsible for them.

All other things being equal, one might have thought that this would benefit Najib Razak, who is both Abdullah's deputy as well as his rival. But with the emergence of a photo of the alleged victim standing with one of Najib's aides in the office of the deputy prime minister, any benefit Najib could have gained from the public backlash against Abdullah has gone out the window.

As if Najib didn't already have his hands full trying to fend off the allegations surrounding himself and his wife in regard to the Altantuya Shaariibuu murder, he now faces a fresh round of allegations in regard to the Anwar sodomy case. In fact, Najib had to go as far as to hold a press conference to deny any involvement on his part.

Anwar may win Malay sympathy

Undoubtedly the person who has gained most from this allegation is Anwar himself. These allegations, barring a Chua Soi Lek-type video, will hold no water. It has already been dismissed by the public as a political ploy.

Most importantly for Anwar, he has gained a powerful lever to wrench back some of the Malay support that he may have been lost as a result of the scare tactics employed by Umno, and even Dr Mahathir Mohamad, that the Malays would lose out as a result of the opposition gaining strength and even more so if Anwar takes over as PM.

This approach seemed to be gaining some traction amongst the Malay ground, so much so that it prompted rumours of possible Umno-PAS cooperation on issues to do with 'Malay unity'.

So, in an ironic sense, this fresh allegation of sodomy was just the fillip Anwar needed to get Malay sympathy back to his side.

Anwar, always the master tactician, has milked this situation to the max. By taking refuge in the Turkish embassy, ostensibly out of fear for his personal safety, he has elevated both the drama as well as the public sympathy for his situation.

While we have no doubt that Anwar has received death threats in the past and probably on a regular basis, it can't be denied that his decision to seek shelter at the Turkish embassy had a strategic value either.

Fortuitously for Anwar, the sodomy allegation came at a time when he was just about to file a police report on the attorney-general and the inspector-general of police alleging that both of them were complicit in fabricating evidence against him. This impeccable timing only bolsters Anwar's claim that the previous sodomy charges were politically motivated as is the current charge.

Did he frame himself?

Last but not least, this latest development actually buys Anwar more time to achieve his aim of toppling the government through crossovers. September 16 is coming up fast and so far there is no indication that there will be a mass crossover happening any time soon. His credibility was at stake.

Now, with what has happened, if September 16 comes and goes without any change of government, no one is going to blame him. After all, he's now busy fighting off a smear campaign and even fearing for his life!

Given that Anwar will benefit enormously from this new sodomy allegation, some of the more cynical folks out there might think that he himself was behind this development in the first place.

We dismiss this scenario as it is way too risky for him to do something like that – that is, to frame himself for sodomy in the hopes of gaining public sympathy. Anwar may be a politician in a hurry but he's not reckless.

In light of the events over the past two days, the planned anti-petrol hike rally on Sunday, July 6, will take on a new dimension. It will morph into an anti-petrol hike, anti-BN, anti-Pak Lah, anti-Najib and pro-Anwar reformasi type rally. Will this be the straw that breaks the BN's grip on government?

Liwat-gate: Who's behind this?

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