

**Umno leaders: He is bluffing**  
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**Beh Lih Yi**

Umno supreme council member Shahrir Abdul Samad said the Barisan Nasional (BN) is ready to face any by-election planned by the opposition but does not foresee it happening any time soon.

MCPX

shahrir samad interview 240907 "When it comes, we will face it. It's not a problem for us at the moment. I don't see any by-election (announcement) this week," Shahrir, who is also the domestic trade and consumer affairs minister told reporters in the Parliament lobby.

He said that even if PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim succeeds in making a return to active politics through a by-election, it would not alter the majority enjoyed by BN in the Dewan Rakyat.

Shahrir was responding to Anwar's claim yesterday that the new sodomy allegation against him was intended to derail his announcement of a by-election that he expects to contest.

To force a by-election, PKR will have to ask one of its 31 parliamentarians to resign.

anwar ibrahim 02 060207 Anwar also claimed that four parliamentarians from BN - two of whom are from Umno - would defect to the opposition Pakatan Rakyat this week.

Responding to this, Shahrir said he did not expect any of his Umno colleagues to jump ship.

"I don't think so. I doubt it, it's quite difficult to keep a secret among politicians. If there are already people who want to jump, by now their close aides will know," argued Shahrir.

hishamuddin hussein Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein also dismissed Anwar's claim.

"That (the by-election and defection claim) is not new... why has it become a reason now for the (sodomy) allegation?" he said at a separate press conference in the Parliament lobby.

**'More details tonight'**

In a related development, PKR vice-president Azmin Ali said Anwar would announce more details about the by-election plan and defection of the four BN MPs at a mass gathering in Shah Alam tonight.

azmin ali Azmin, however, refused to shed more light on the matter, when pressed by reporters at Parliament.

There is wide speculation that Anwar will contest either the Bandar Tun Razak seat in Kuala Lumpur or Kuala Kangsar in Perak.

Bandar Tun Razak is held by PKR's Khalid Ibrahim, who is also Selangor menteri besar. He

had said earlier that he may relinquish the seat for Anwar, since he also holds the Ijok state seat.

rafidah aziz 01The electoral victory of Umno Wanita chief Rafidah Aziz in Kuala Kangsar is being challenged through an election petition, with a court ruling due on Friday.

Anwar has said he is eyeing the seat as it close to his home state of Penang, and is also the location of the Malay College, where he once studied.

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