

Witnesses recall PKR leader's arrest
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Opposition icon Anwar Ibrahim had not ruled out the possibility of being arrested. But what he had not expected was for masked policemen to ambush his car on the way home.
MCPX

Around 9am on Wednesday, the charismatic politician looking sharp in a brown blazer smiled and waved to reporters camped outside his house as he left for the Anti-Corruption Agency headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

Little did Anwar know that he would not be able to make it back home for lunch.

"It was drizzling when he left the house, and for superstitious people that is a bad omen," said Nanyang Siang Pau photographer Tan Yik Long who was there that morning.

sankara pc on anwar 150708 02 Recounting what happened, Anwar's lawyer Sankara Nair, who was in the car with the politician, said: "By about 10.10am, we arrived at Putrajaya and soon after, Anwar was giving his statements to three officers."

Slightly more than an hour later, Anwar requested the ACA officers to put on record that he would like to continue the interview at another time because he had a 2pm appointment with the police.

Anwar had an appointment at the police headquarters to have his statement recorded over sodomy allegations made by his former aide Saiful Bukhary Azlan.

"We told them of the appointment and why we can't proceed... the officers recorded our request and we promised to come back on Monday," said the lawyer.

Masked commandos

anwar arrest sequence 170708 As he left the ACA building, Anwar was mobbed by scores of reporters and photographers seeking his comments.

The politician obliged and even joked about his suggestion to ACA to continue the interview "at the police compound" if he was arrested.

He then left Putrajaya at about 11.45am, heading back to his house.

"Anwar felt that he should go home and refresh himself, pray and see his family because he was afraid that there would be an arrest," said Sankara.

What the politician did not know was that a team of police personnel, including members of the elite unit, were waiting to pounce on him at a junction a stone's throw away from his house in Bukit Segambut, Kuala Lumpur.

It was 12.45pm. The heavy police presence puzzled Sankara as he had just got off the phone with investigating officer DSP Jude Pereira, confirming that Anwar would be at the

police headquarters by 2pm.

"We didn't get out of the car. We waited for them to approach. An officer approached as I wound down the window... I ask what this was all about," said the lawyer.

The police officer, known only as Taufek, informed Anwar that he was arrested and be brought to the police headquarters.

Anwar's driver for 25 years, Abdullah Sani Said, recalled that there were 20 police personnel and some of them were sporting balaclava masks.

He too was puzzled at the need for the arrest and was certain that he could have ferried his boss on time for the 2pm appointment.

Sankara however stressed that Anwar was not handcuffed or manhandled during the incident.

'He looked shocked'

At this juncture, Tan arrived at the scene by chance and was stopped by traffic police personnel.

"I saw Anwar outside his car and I rushed on foot and just started shooting pictures," said the photographer, who managed to capture exclusive photos of the arrest (above).

"He (Anwar) looked shocked and fearful. He was hesitant to get into the police vehicle," he said, adding that the incident ended in less than a minute.

The balaclava-clad police refused to let Sankara to go with Anwar.

Tan had been camping outside Anwar's residence since 5am and bumped into the police convoy while he was leaving the area after his shift had ended.

anwar ibrahim freed from police ipk detention pc 170708 waving "I was lucky that the police did not confiscate my camera to stop me from taking photos," he said.

Anwar was then taken to the police headquarters where he was grilled for several hours. After this, he was taken to the Kuala Lumpur hospital but refused to provide a DNA sample or undergo a full medical examination.

He was then brought back to the police headquarters where he spent the night and was released the next morning.

The police defended the manner in which the opposition icon was arrested because they had reason to believe that he would not come by 2pm, but critics have dismissed it as an unnecessary show of force.