

Wan Azizah ... the real hero
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My phone has been buzzing non stop since the announcement was made. It is the same message all day...
MCPX

wan azizah resign permatang pauh by election for anwar 310708 05PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail is vacating her Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat for her husband, Anwar Ibrahim, to contest in a by-election.

There is no talk other than this the whole day. The news is on the television, radio and internet, including the social networking site Facebook. Even my doctor was talking about it.

It is only natural for there to be so much excitement. This is because the upcoming contest for Permatang Pauh will be the 'mother of all by-elections.'

Anwar is 'sure' of winning Permatang Pauh and I wouldn't bet against him in this seat.

In all the excitement and the gearing-up for the by-election, a few things popped into my mind.

Why now?

Immediately after the 12th general election, Anwar was so confident of winning in any by-election that he did not want any PKR MPs to vacate their seats to enable him to contest.

According to him, the call was made based on principles. He had announced that he will contest in the first parliamentary seat that fell vacant 'naturally'. Now, it would have taken a lot of gumption to contest in such a by-election as he would not have been able to choose the battlefield or the timing.

wan azizah wan ismail biodata 310708 Then again, it probably made a lot of political sense (and with it the political mileage) to portray such bravado on the wave of the opposition's sterling performance in the March 8 polls.

If one observed Anwar and didn't get caught up in just listening to him, it can be seen that he has always been a practical politician.

He is now contesting in a safe seat. Well done, some people get to keep their cake and eat it too.

Another issue is the timing of this 'forced' by-election.

Anwar could have imposed a by-election on the nation anytime after the expiry of his disqualification period in April.

However, he has chosen to do it now, when the police had just completed their investigations on the sodomy allegation and the attorney-general has yet to decide as to whether or not to

charge him.

With this announcement, Anwar has upped the ante.

Irrespective of whether the AG proceeds to charge him or close the file, the AG's decision will be viewed as being politically motivated and magnified as such in view of the impending by-election. It's a classic case of heads you lose, tails I win.

If the AG proceeds with the charge, the government will be accused of attempting to thwart Anwar's political ambition. And if the charge is dropped, the government will be accused of drumming up a false allegation to begin with.

The true hero

Actually, I have transgressed from the main topic of my article. In a way, my diversion underscores the very point I am trying to make here.

I wanted to talk about the woman behind the man.

Not only was she the woman behind him, Wan Azizah was also the woman in front, when fate summoned her to the forefront.

Despite our differing political affiliations, I have always admired her courage and fortitude as a person, a wife and mother. From a simple wife and mother, she took on the mettle to form and lead a political movement and party.

wan azizah interview 270308 01She continued the struggle when the going was tough. She, more than anyone else in this world, knows Anwar the man. And she has always stood by him, no matter what.

Now, she is stepping aside to let him step forward. This brings to mind the final lesson in Nelson Mandela's Eight Lessons of Leadership - Quitting is Leading too.

Anwar has stolen the limelight once again. While everyone is in a frenzy over the coming by-election and the 'heroics' of Anwar, we should not forget the true hero that held the fort for her husband.

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