

Permatang Pauh: It's Najib vs Anwar
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The Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election results will be a 'referendum' on Anwar Ibrahim's desire to become the prime minister.
MCPX

Lim Guan Eng will indicate public confidence in the Anwar-led Pakatan Rakyat's drive to initiate urgent reforms to the nation's political governance, said DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

From the outset, he said, it would be an electoral battle between the Pakatan Rakyat opposition leader and Barisan Nasional premier-in-waiting Najib Abdul Razak.

"Although the BN designated prime minister will not contest the seat, nonetheless it looks like a battle between him and Anwar," he said when asked whether the Permatang Pauh verdict would steer Pakatan Rakyat to seize power at the centre.

Najib and Anwar and Permatang Pauh 010808 Najib heads the BN election machinery for the Permatang Pauh by-election scheduled on Aug 26. Nomination day falls on Aug 16.

"Let's see who Permatang Pauh chooses," said Lim, who is also Penang chief minister at his office today.

At a rally in Seberang Jaya last Sunday, Lim introduced Anwar as Pakatan Rakyat's premier-in-waiting to a large crowd mainly consisting of Permatang Pauh constituents.

Although Anwar faces a fresh sodomy charge, Lim is confident the allegation by the PKR de facto leader's former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan would not stand and have a major impact on the final outcome.

Lim said the police's remark in court yesterday that Anwar had fully cooperated with them in their investigations would dampen BN's effort to depict a bleak picture.

He said BN would not be able to convince the public that Anwar did not cooperate, and is thus "hiding something."

"It will boost Anwar's public rating," he added.

He said many people have realised now that the sodomy charge was 'plotted' to discredit and smear Anwar and deprive him the chance of returning to Parliament.

"Obviously the more BN slanders, the better is his chances of winning," he added.

Electoral roll

Permatang Pauh past election results 060808 Meanwhile, election watchdog, Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections (Mafrel) northern region coordinator B K Ong questioned the Election Commission on the authenticity of the by-election electoral roll.

EC announced that an electoral roll updated on July 31 will be used, a move Mafrel criticised as having "broken all rules of fair play."

He is sceptical over the 'validity' of the list because the roll had not been displayed in public for constituents to check and verify nor has it been gazetted.

Ong said the EC had to gazette the roll in time for polling day and "this has to happen in the next 9 days."

He recalled that in the 1999 general election, some 685,000 voters were denied their balloting rights although they had registered seven months prior to it.

He said the electoral roll used for last March's general election was based on data accumulated by Dec 31, 2007 and gazetted at February end.

Thus, he said, it is strange the EC would rush to gazette just a single constituency's electoral roll, while leaving the rest of the country ungazetted, raising suspicion that it could lead to different versions of electoral rolls and confusion among polling officials and agents.

"It's unprecedented EC efficiency," he said.

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