

**Ambivalent about Anwar?**  
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So what do you think of Anwar?

MCPX

But why give Anwar Ibrahim serious thought? Because. We cannot allow ourselves to tune out even though we're seemingly bombarded by a cache of confusing contradictions. We owe it to Anwar to sift the wheat from the chaff because he has been, in his own words, the target of a "systematic character assassination campaign".

chandra muzafarI personally would prefer to switch off on his chief critics like Chandra Muzaffar. Chandra had said it would be "an unmitigated disaster" for Malaysia if Anwar were to become prime minister. Some of my friends too hate Anwar. I won't repeat their negative views which were shared with me in private. However with the Mother of All By-elections on the cards, it's worth exploring publicly expressed views on the man who would be PM.

The former deputy premier gets everybody's knickers in a twist and none more than his former boss Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and Dr M's children. What's rich is that Papa Doc of the 'Look East' policy is fixated on looking inside Anwar's knickers.

mahathir and anwar hardtalk showDr M is unable to think straight on Anwar, but then again the ex-PM is a singular man who could conceive of a crooked half-bridge. His blog posting on July 17 is headlined 'The Anwar debate', suggesting the write-up would be about the debate between his bete noir and Information Minister Shabery Cheek regarding petrol subsidy. The Che Det article contained 18 paragraphs; the first three were on topic and the remaining 15 veered off to Anwar's sodomy imbroglio.

Mahathir blogged, "The probability is that the story [Anwar's sodomy] is the same because it is genuine", adding "There are certain habits which are not easy to be rid off."

His daughter Marina showed a similar skew, and instead of focusing on the topic of fuel hike, her debate review merely took cheap shots at Anwar.

If his sister has her popular blog and newspaper column as a public platform, Mukhriz Mahathir has the august House. On July 16, Mukhriz said in Parliament, "What is true, what I believe is that Datuk Seri Anwar really carried out the act [applause from the MPs]. Truly, he did this despicable thing."

azmin aliMukhriz had been provoked by Gombak Member of Parliament, PKR vice-president Azmin Ali, into retorting, "Yang Berhormat from Gombak said just now it was allegedly my father who abused his powers in directing police to take the action against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. Currently Tun Dr Mahathir has been retired five years. So what accusations does he (Azmin) want to make?"

### **The accused**

With the many twists and turns that Sodomy Round 2 has taken, those who believe in Anwar's innocence will not be convinced otherwise. But what's a certainty are the double standards. Do

we know of any other Malaysian, in the history of our country, who charged with consensual sodomy, has been the focus of such concerted if not altogether convoluted action by police, prosecutors, the courts, and put to trial by media?

But more than abysmal standards, the machinations by the authorities have thrown Malaysia into a state of anomie where our values have gone awry.

vk lingam tape judge fixing fiasco 210907 sequence 01Take this surreal ranting by Dr M who posted in his blog on July 5 that he was "the subject of Anwar's plotting and vengeance". He claimed Anwar released the Lingam tape because "actually his action was in order to seek revenge against me", and that the Lingamgate disclosure was "an indirect way of getting at me".

To imagine that for 22 years this country was helmed by such a 'me-me-me' Captain. And imagine this former premier declaring, "If [Anwar] becomes prime minister, I will get out of the country. Give everything to him" – as reported by Utusan Malaysia. Imagine that patriotic Malaysians should have so loved their Great Leader who is so willing to jump ship.

For mercy's sake then, Anwar if he ever takes over should be magnanimous enough to give Dr M a lifeboat to row to Zimbabwe.

### **Potshots at Anwar**

Former US vice-president Al Gore had blogged on Aug 1: "The real tragedy is that the government of Malaysia engages in character assassination to silence an effective leader of the political opposition. Twice, now, the government has used the same tactic in an effort to politically destroy Anwar Ibrahim."

al goreFor those who do not support either Anwar or PKR – and I count myself in this category – all Malaysians nonetheless owe a debt of gratitude to Anwar for giving us, as Gore says, not one but two chances at ridding ourselves of the evil regime. Thank Anwar for blowing the winds of change. Thank him for putting the phrase 'Ketuanan Rakyat' in our public domain. For proclaiming the Never Ending Policy has to be phased out.

Some BN strategists and campaigners have told reporters they will make the sodomy charge an election issue in Permatang Pauh. This lends credence to Gore's supposition. Will Anwar, like Chandra alleges, be an unmitigated disaster for us all? I don't know. Anwar has not reached the pinnacle of power. Since Anwar is a 'what if', let's just ponder on the 'what is'.

Examine the charges levelled at Anwar. Pahang Menteri Besar Adnan Yaakob on Saturday alluded to Anwar being a sweet talker who makes empty promises. Anwar may or may not deliver but consider that Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is not only guilty of the same, we've seen him franchise the word 'flip-flop' and heard him say one thing and do another barely 24 hours later.

liow tiong laiThen there is Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai who on Sunday levied the accusation that Anwar is two-faced and forked-tongued.

I say this with total conviction: Liow's party the MCA is two-faced, forked-tongued and furthermore, incapacitated. His own and his senior colleagues' response to revelations of the Umno-PAS secret talks indict them irredeemably. MCA has been well aware of Umno's Malay Supremacy agenda, chose to make a self-serving pact with the devil and at the same time it

and party organ the Star shamelessly peddled BN's snake oil of 'national unity' and 'racial harmony'.

The attacks on Anwar are opinions. What is fact is the unfair one-sidedness where the whole weight of the system has been brought to bear on a man who has few avenues and little mainstream access to defend his character. The airtime and column inches given Chandra, and the 'right of reply' correspondingly denied Anwar, is but one example.

In politics there are no permanent friends or foes. Chandra was Anwar's erstwhile friend and is today chief propaganda enemy. In Parliament on July 16, MPs Khairy Jamaluddin and Mukhriz tag teamed to attack the 'absent' Anwar on the sodomy allegations. Mirror, mirror on the wall, between the four gentlemen, who is the fairest one of all? Chandra, the Son-in-Law and The Son have been unfair.

mukhriz mahathir 290508Mukhriz as Umno Youth international relations chairman issued a press release saying: Al Gore's "reprehensible statements against Malaysia in support of Anwar Ibrahim is proof of the pudding that Anwar Ibrahim is a political puppet of the United States government", and "Perhaps Al Gore needs to be updated that true democracy is alive and well in Malaysia. [BN's March 8 election losses] "couldn't have been possible if elections in Malaysia weren't free and fair".

I cannot forecast what will happen to us if Anwar succeeds but we can see clearly BN's beastly behaviour as sore losers. The smear campaign against Anwar will take the tack, as indicated by Mukhriz, that Anwar is an American political puppet. Now if Mahathir were to advise, they'd say Anwar is a Zionist stooge.

Mahathir Mark II claims true democracy is alive and well in Malaysia. Hah! Elections are free and fair. Ha-ha. Watch Permatang Pauh!

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