

Candidate accuses BN of 'dirty tricks'
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim today accused the government of using "dirty tricks" to disrupt his campaign to return to parliament in a by-election.
MCPX

Anwar said the government had ordered its supporters to heckle him over allegations he sodomised a young male aide, which he has dismissed as a plot to derail his ambitions of seizing power.

And he said the ruling coalition was playing on tensions between the majority Malays and minority ethnic Chinese and Indians, by sending SMS text messages to Malay villagers slamming Anwar as an "agent of the Chinese".

"These are dirty tactics. It is a malicious campaign on their part and is completely immoral," he told a press conference.

And he said the government had ordered its supporters to heckle their opposition opponents by yelling "sodomy, sodomy" at political events.

anwar ibrahim and saiful bukhari azlan"Look at our campaign slogan, it is "Reform" and "Independence". But their leaders, led by (Deputy Premier) Najib Razak, asked them to shout 'sodomy' to our camp of supporters," he said.

The Aug 26 by-election is being seen as a test of Anwar's popularity after Mohamad Saiful Bukhari Azlan, a 23-year-old former aide, accused him of sodomy - the same charge that saw him jailed a decade ago.

Two medical reports

Anwar served as deputy premier with the coalition until he was sacked in 1998 during a power struggle, and jailed for six years on sodomy and corruption charges. The sex charge was later overturned.

The charismatic 61-year-old is widely expected to win the by-election, and return to parliament in the latest step of his campaign to oust the coalition which has ruled for half a century since independence from Britain.

Anwar has again rejected the sodomy allegations, and said he had seen two medical reports on his accuser which showed he had no case to answer.

"I am telling you there is no case, they cannot proceed... the medical report is so clear. In the event the judicial system is fair, whichever judge hears the case will throw it out," he told reporters.

saiful bukhari azlan and anwar ibrahim sodomy 2 pc 150808 06On Friday, the eve of nomination day, Mohamad Saiful (photo, left) visited a mosque to swear on the Quran, that he was telling the truth and challenged Anwar to do the same.

He also said he was sodomised against his will, although when Anwar was formally accused in court earlier this month the charge indicated the alleged sex act was consensual.

Anwar's supporters said the timing of the mosque visit was clearly politically motivated, and designed to smear his reputation ahead of the by-election.

"You can see the dirty tricks beginning in their campaign. It is corrupt and immoral to use religion and the Quran," Anwar said today.

Malay votes will boost Pakatan standing

Anwar has said that after March elections that handed the opposition alliance a third of parliamentary seats and five states, he is poised to oust the coalition with the help of defecting government lawmakers.

Analysts said the government would use the by-election to try to undermine Anwar's ability to appeal to all of Malaysia's racial groups - a first in the nation's political history.

"They will probably try to convince voters that Islam is under threat and that Malay rights are under threat," said Ibrahim Suffian from the Merdeka Centre research firm.

DAP leader Lim Kit Siang said the vote would be a referendum on the opposition's performance since March.

"It is not called the mother of by-elections for nothing. It is an indication of national politics and of our track record so far, it is a barometer of politics in Malaysia at large," he told AFP.

"If Anwar succeeds in pulling in a large number of Malay votes, it will boost the oppositions' standing and the road to forming the next government will be clearer."