

Arif : we are not buying voters
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Athi Veerangan

Barisan Nasional by-election candidate Arif Shah Omar Shah refuted widespread allegations that Permatang Pauh voters were being bribed to stop them from voting for his rival Anwar Ibrahim.
MCPX

Instead, the Seberang Jaya state assemblyperson said BN had only paid party election agents and volunteers to reimburse their daily expenses for food and travel, not to constituents.

arif shah omar shah bn umno candidate for permatang pauh by election 140808 13"BN will not indulge into such things to prevent voters from exercising their democratic rights," he told journalists at Saffira Country Club in Seberang Jaya, Penang today.

He was commenting on the Pakatan Rakyat leader's allegation that voters were allegedly told by BN agents not to come out to vote on the by-election polling on Tuesday Aug 26.

Anwar told Kampung Bagan Serai residents during an evening hi-tea session that BN had started a whispering campaign - one informing the voters not to go out and vote since 'Anwar was sure to win'.

He also claimed that voters would be given some 'gift' for not voting for him.

On Monday, several voters complained to Malaysiakini that they were paid RM50 each by a BN election agent, who also took photocopies of their identity cards.

When asked on this, Arif Shah appeared surprised about the payment to the voters but admitted the agents were collecting identity cards to account for their daily routine duties.

"They have to collect the copies of identity cards to prove their daily work," he said.

However, before he could answer about the payment, he was quickly whisked away from the press conference by an aide.

Arif's seven strategies

BN national chairperson Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was visiting the constituency for the first time since the Arif Shah was announced as candidate, also brushed aside Anwar's complaint.

anwar ibrahim permatang pauh forum 170808 02"Anwar is always good in accusing others, perhaps because he was the one committing the wrongdoings," said the premier.

The Umno president said the BN by-election machinery would have to beef up its campaign strategies and style to wrest the seat from PKR's control.

Earlier he met Chinese community leaders and women members of various mosque qariahs in the constituency to woo their voters for Arif Shah.

He had also attended a village function in Tanah Liat area to gauge BN's popularity among rural Malays in Penanti, among the three constituencies under Permatang Pauh.

The other two are Arif Shah's Seberang Jaya and Permatang Pasir.

Arif Shah meanwhile rated his chances of winning the seat as 55-45 in favour of Anwar, and said "a little bit more extra hardwork would win me the constituency."

He said his machinery had lined-up seven strategies to woo the voters, with one being identifying 'special' voters, who were registered as Permatang Pauh voters but were residing outside the area.

"I do not want to call them phantom voters.

"For instance, there was house with five registered voters, but when checked only two are staying in it," he said.

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