

Swearing for votes?
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comment The self-confessed coffee boy Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan's swearing on the Holy Quran is likened to a desperate gamble at the eleventh hour to wrest victory from the jaws of certain defeat in Permatang Pauh.

Umno, its half-hearted BN allies having all but abandoned it, has begun playing the swearing over-and-over again in the mainstream media which it controls either through the government or party apparatus. It is doubtful that repairing potholes, patching the roads, removing the mountains of garbage, handing out zinc roofing sheets and 'tambang bas' (bus fare) and, when all else fails, the threat of withholding "development" will work.

saiful bukhari azlan and anwar ibrahim sodomy 2 pc 150808 03Earlier, the ex-coffee boy started a blog and pledged to publicly swear on the Quran "demi Allah, bangsa, agama dan negara". (for God, race, religion and country. He left out King.)

No doubt, it is a familiar script as advised by perhaps only those who had a hand in the making of the first, Sodomy One, and involves the manipulation of the system by people who certainly know how it works, where the loopholes are and how it can be navigated and manipulated to their ends.

In the same way that the media can be expertly manipulated towards a certain predictable and desirable end even without it being aware. The media, of course, has an important role to play in going to town with the second sodomy allegation as it did with the first.

Outside the principal hatchers of apparently a second conspiracy are the others, unknowing participants and puppets caught up helplessly in the tide of events. In the end, what can they do but their lowly and miserable jobs. Theirs, being lesser mortals caught up in an epic struggle between opposing factions for political power, is apparently not to question why or moralise. Blame the eternal rat race!

Special Branch and the media

Information Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek says the government does not dictate to the newspapers. This is only half true, according to veteran hackers.

"The fact is they carefully choose not only who heads government party-owned and controlled papers but also even reporters who are sent to government press conferences," says one veteran hacker whose byline has been black-listed by the official mouthpieces of the government.

saiful bukhari azalan swears on the al quran anwar sodomy 2 180808 01"The Special Branch, all party diehards, play a role in this. If a reporter asks "difficult" questions at a press conference, the editor will receive a call from the minister's henchman."

Quite often, veteran hackers claim, the Special Branch has a meeting with all editors of the government-owned and government-controlled media. One veteran hacker was told this by a struggling national English daily colleague whose husband was with the Special Branch.

It seems he asked her about the hacker after a Special Branch meeting with her then editor and the others. She came up to the hacker innocently and said: "My husband asked about you today!" Not long after that, the hacker was transferred from the sub desk, the main desk, to the marketing supplements desk "to write advertising crap".

Everything has led up to this moment from the time that the ex-coffee boy, a strapping six-foot university drop-out, made his explosive claims in late June that he was sodomised – "I was assaulted with a plastic" goes the initial claim - in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Hong Kong by fallen angel and one-time deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, a man who sees himself as prime minister-in-waiting, at this point in time, rather than a martyr for the opposition cause, although he has raised the latter possibility if things become awry.

Initially, the ex-coffee boy only mentioned the plastic and a suite at a plush condo in Kuala Lumpur where Anwar apparently met with possible defectors from the ruling coalition as he plotted the downfall of the federal government of which he feels he had been wrongfully robbed 10 years ago.

Is there more to it than meets the eye in the frantic washing of dirty linen in public?

Need for publicity?

In the case of Saiful, it could personally be also the need for publicity coupled with other factors like Najib Abdul Razak, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Umno, the cause of the self-preservationists and survivalists.

"There is a theory that all publicity is good, even negative publicity. Notoriety brings its own rewards," says one media analyst.

"Samy Vellu is one who believes in this concept. In previous years, he never used to even bother suing the media because he was happy with any publicity. In recent years, he started suing the papers. That part, I haven't figured out but maybe he wants even more publicity."

anwar ibrahim exclusive pre permatang pauh interview 130808 05Major players aside, it appears that the entire establishment and the fat cats in the business community linked to the ruling party, not just the ruling elite in Umno, are arranged against Anwar in the matter of the second sodomy allegation against him. Political analysts and observers are scrambling to seek a rational explanation for this phenomenon.

The culture of sycophancy, 'bodekism', built up over 50 years of ruling party patronage as the single most important reason for the anti-Anwar phenomenon in official circles.

Over the years, the major complaint has been that various branches of the government apparatus have become acting branches of the ruling party and stacked key positions with card carrying members.

This has raised serious questions about the impartiality and professionalism of the various branches of government who are charged with investigating the second sodomy allegation against Anwar.

The suspicion is that there is a strong element of stage-management of the whole episode by various parties in dolled-up western suits seeking to portray a public impression of strict

neutrality and aided by the government party-owned and controlled mainstream media, is almost the universal consensus among most political observers and analysts.

Sometimes it goes beyond mere 'bodekism' to self-preservation or survival and certainly a combination of factors. "This is where the mole factor also comes in," point out the leaders of PKR. "The AG and the IGP would have acted the way they did even without directions or instructions from the PM, present or past."

Uphill battle

Clearly, Anwar is engaged in an uphill and perhaps even a losing battle to dislodge the ruling Umno/BN coalition from the seat of power after wresting away four of the country's richest states – Selangor, Perak, Penang and rice-bowl Kedah – and the Federal territory of Kuala Lumpur from the ruling coalition, in addition to his Islamist allies, PAS, retaining their traditional stronghold in Kelantan.

If Anwar pulls off for what now seems like the impossible and wrests come Sept 16 the reins of the federal government in Putrajaya, a strange irrelevant Moghul Empire-like fairyland setting in the tropical jungle built by Mahathir, it will be nothing short of a revolution in the making. There will be a complete makeover of Malaysia under his reformasi government.

That may be the single most important reason why the odds are stacked against him as he gamely soldiers on almost single-handedly in the face of innumerable hurdles, beatings, jailing, arrests, detentions, intimidations, court cases and black propaganda.

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