

Anwar : Ezam desperate for attention
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Beh Lih Yi

Opposition icon Anwar Ibrahim today took a swipe at his protege-turned-foe Ezam Mohd Nor, but declined to respond to the barrage of accusations hurled against him, saying it was a desperate ploy by the latter to win the attention of Umno leaders.
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"He is desperate to get the attention of Umno leaders, so I am not going to entertain him," Anwar told reporters after visiting a hawker centre in Seberang Jaya.

ezam mohd nor permatang pauh ceramah 180808 01 Last Saturday, Ezam (left) said if Anwar was serious about fighting corruption, he should make public the six boxes of documents in his possession containing evidence of high-level graft in the government.

Anwar today side-stepped reporters' questions on whether he was indeed keeping the boxes, counter-accusing his former political secretary of posturing for the Umno-led BN ruling coalition as it goes head to head with Pakatan for the constituency.

"For 10 years he (Ezam) said he was in the possession (of the documents) and now during the Permatang Pauh by-election he says he has surrendered them to me, do you take him seriously?"

"It must be just last week that he changed his mind," retorted Anwar, declining to confirm whether or not the boxes were in his possession.

anwar ibrahim tengiri market permatang pauh by election 180808 02 Anwar also said unless Ezam lodged a report with the authorities first, he would not respond to the latter's accusation that he had handed out projects worth RM1 billion each to 15 bumiputera 'crony' companies when he was deputy prime minister and finance minister.

"He has to identify (the alleged companies)," Anwar said.

Anwar was sacked from the government in 1998 by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and later jailed on sodomy and corruption charges he says were framed by his political enemies.

The sodomy charges have since been overturned by the courts, but the 61-year old is facing fresh allegations of sodomy, this time by a former personal aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

Anwar, who has pleaded not guilty, insists the latest charges are politically motivated to stop him and his alliance from taking power and forming a new government by Sept 16.

No rift with Hadi

The de facto opposition leader also denied talk of a widening rift with PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang, who was notably absent from the Permatang Pauh nomination centre on Saturday.

Anwar, favoured to win in hotly-contested Permatang Pauh by-election, said Hadi could not come because he was busy with his party's annual general assembly in Ipoh.

pas muktamar 2008 hadi "I don't think it's fair to interpret it that way. He called me yesterday and told me that he needs a two-day break and then he will come and spend a few days to campaign in Permatang Pauh," Anwar said.

He also played down Hadi's non-committal reaction when asked whether he would support Anwar's appointment as premier if Pakatan came to power.

For now, it is a non-issue, Anwar said, pointing out that Hadi had also to take into account the views of certain members in his Islamic party.

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