

**Police 'birds' swoop in on campaign**  
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Fear and election results have always been synonymous, and in the high stakes by-election coming up in Permatang Pauh, the fear factor is building up.  
MCPX

Police helicopters have been filling the night air since nomination day.

On Monday - for the third night straight - a police helicopter circled Taman Ciku in Bukit Mertajam where a Pakatan Rakyat rally was in progress. There were some 800 persons in the crowd that night.

Police have confirmed the one hour episode as routine surveillance patrol, but residents have said that they are not used to aerial incursions.

anwar ibrahim tengiri market permatang pauh by election 180808 01On Saturday night at a large rally in Permatang Pasir - in the midst of PKR candidate Anwar Ibrahim's speech - a police helicopter showed up. Allaying fear in the crowd, Anwar asked the crowd to enjoy the chopper's antics since "it's not always we have a helicopter flying over us in Permatang Pasir."

Each time helicopters have been passing over these rallies, crowds have cheered them on excitedly - somehow adding to the general ambience of evening events.

Yet PKR supporters are convinced this is a fear tactic, and consistent with Barisan Nasional's intent to move votes by all means possible.

Election watchdog, Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections (Mafrel) has received several complaints from voters on the 'chopper' issue, and its coordinator B K Ong believes it may be intimidation tactic by those in power.

In this hotly contested by-election, PKR de facto leader Anwar, 61, faces BN candidate and standing Seberang Jaya state assemblyperson Ariff Shah Omar Shah, 52, and Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (AKIM) president Hanafi Hamat, 61.

A victory for Anwar on Aug 26 polling day would see him returning to Parliament as an elected representative after a 10-year absence since he was sacked from the government in 1998.

### **Trekking the seat**

Meanwhile, the candidates - with the exception of Hanafi - not dampened by the torrential rains have been crisscrossing the parliamentary seat.

The Akim president is reported to be back home in Kelantan resting, and will resume his campaigning on Wednesday.

arif shah bn candidate permatang pauh walkabout 170808 02Ariff displayed his human touch by wading through foot-high waters in flash flooded villages to express his concern for the residents while Anwar has been busy with voters in Seberang Jaya.

Arif has just started campaigning outside his state seat yesterday. Anwar as expected has spread his calendar across the seat his family held on for 26 years.

At spots close to Umno-BN operation centres are large screens displaying Anwar's sodomy accuser Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan's Quran swearing video.

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