

Anwar gets BIGGER majority
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 26, 2008

Malaysiakini goes live today with the by-election coverage, giving updates on the voting and other happenings in this constituency. Please click 'Refresh' or 'Reload' in your browser for the latest reports from Permatang Pauh.

MCPX

[See map]

9.50pm: Official EC tally - Anwar Ibrahim got 31,195 votes, Arif Shah Omar Shah, 15,524, Hanafi Hamat, 92. Anwar won with a majority of 15,671.

Anwar's wife, Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, won the seat with a 13,398 majority at the March 8 general election.

The official voter turnout was 81.01 percent. There were 58,459 registered voters. The final voter turnout figure was much higher than what the EC had stated earlier today.

There were 447 spoilt votes and 98 unreturned ballot papers.

The turnout today is slightly higher than March 8.

Meanwhile, outside the main counting centre Tuanku Bainun Teaching Institute, thousands of jubilant PKR supporters had gathered to embrace their leader's return to Parliament.

PKR vice-president Azmin Ali was there to address the crowd numbering some 10,000. Other party leaders like R Sivarasa and Tian Chua were also there.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang and PAS' Husam Musa were also there.

Anwar also addressed the ecstatic group of supporters, thanking voters for their support.

"I thank God who has been with me through this gruelling election process. I thank the voters," Anwar said as he arrived at the counting centre where some 10,000 supporters were holding a wild celebration.

"The message is clear... we have made a demand for change, for freedom and for justice," he said. "The people do not want to be exploited. We want an economic order that protects all the people."

Hundreds of riot police stood guard and a helicopter hovered overhead as the crowd gathered on a field outside the building, chanting "Putrajaya! Putrajaya!" - the name of the administrative capital and the seat of government.

"This is a clear indication that people of all races have rejected the communal politics of Barisan Nasional. It is a clear endorsement of our reform agenda. We are on track to take over the government," said Anwar.

Tian said that the overwhelming victory showed that "the prime minister's racial politics is bankrupt".

The EC made the official announcement at 10.05pm. Only Anwar and Hanafi were present at the announcement. Also present was Wan Azizah.

Hanafi, who was gracious in his embarrassing defeat, said he was not disheartened by the lack of votes for him as he has succeeded in his aims to promote his little known party. He lost his deposit with the low votes he garnered.

9.25pm: Official EC results - With final five ballot boxes to go, Anwar Ibrahim has bagged 29,526 votes, Arif Shah Omar Shah (14,444) and Hanafi Hamat (89). Majority so far: 15,082.

9.12pm: Official EC results - With 11 more boxes to go, Anwar Ibrahim has won the by-election with a 14,551 majority. He garnered 27,977 votes while BN's Arif Shah Omar Shah obtained 13,426 while Akim's Hanafi Hamat got 85.

8pm: Unofficial results - Anwar Ibrahim wins with a majority of 16,210 votes. He garnered 26,646 votes while Arif Shah Omar Shah got 10,436.

However, PKR unofficial results - Anwar wins with a majority of 17,652, obtaining 31,949 votes. BN's Arif Shah garnered 14,297 while Akim's Hanafi Hamat got 74. Hanafi to lose his RM15,000 deposit. This figure would mean 46,320 voters cast their ballots instead of the EC's 38,144.

7.59pm: Unofficial latest count, Anwar has obtained 16,101 votes as opposed to Arif Shah's 6,071.

7.43pm: The EC starts to announce official results as per the ballot boxes it has counted. As it stands, Anwar is leading by 3,507 votes.

The breakdown is as follows: Akim's Hanafi Hamat (9 votes), Anwar (5,398 votes) and Arif Shah (1,891).

So far 20 ballot boxes of a total of 111 have been opened and counted. Anwar had won in ALL these 20 boxes. In one particular box, he had obtained 441 votes compared to Arif's 14.

The EC said that 38,144 ballots were cast today, out of 58,459 eligible voters.

7.25pm: There are signs of significant swing to PKR despite the lower turnout. In the state constituency of Penanti, which PKR won at the March 8 general elections, the party has bagged the sole polling station, Telok Wang, it failed to win five months ago.

March 8 result: BN - 261 votes, PKR - 227
Aug 26 result: BN - 232 votes, PKR - 260

Anwar is also making gains in the state constituency of Seberang Jaya, where PKR had lost to BN candidate Arif on March 8.

7.25pm: Anwar's press conference at 9pm is believed to declare his victory. The press conference was rescheduled to 9pm from its original time of 7.45pm.

7.20pm: Unofficial results so far: Anwar 5,855; Arif Shah 1,910

7.13pm: PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim is to hold a press conference at his by-election headquarters at Yayasan Aman at 7.45pm. Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak will also be holding a press conference at about 9pm.

6.55pm: Counting in all 25 polling stations is now underway. From inside sources, Anwar is leading in all voting streams. Votes are being counted simultaneously in all the polling stations with the results to be sent to the main counting centre for the final tally.

According to EC secretary Kamaruzaman, 38,144 voters went to the ballot box today with turnout being 65.25 percent. This is much lower than the 82 percent turnout at the March 8 general elections

6.30pm: Thousands of supporters, almost all from PKR, have gathered at the main counting centre. A police helicopter was hovering above the centre. Numerous police roadblocks were also mounted along the roads leading to the centre - this despite the police blocking the main access to this place.

About 30 police and FRU trucks were also seen in the vicinity, along with hundreds of police personnel

6.05pm: According to EC secretary Kamaruzaman, voter turnout was at 63.7 percent at 4pm. Final voter turnout yet to be released but expected to be lower than the 82 percent at the March 8 general elections.

5.53pm: The police have blocked the main road to the Tuanku Bainun counting centre where the announcement will be made later tonight. Even journalists with EC tags are not allowed to pass through. The move is seen as an attempt to deter people from gathering at the centre.

5.26pm: BN candidate Arif Shah is still confident of taking the seat.

5.11pm: PKR top leaders are confident that Anwar would win the seat as their exit polls show that he is leading by 18,000 votes.

5.10pm: EC officials will start counting votes polled at the respective polling centres by 6.30pm. The final count from all 25 polling centres will then be brought to the Institut Perguruan Tuanku Bainun for the official result to be announced.

5pm: Polling ends for the Permatang Pauh by-election.

4.35pm: Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is understood to have left Penang to Kuala Lumpur, an early indication that the premier has accepted defeat and has no reason to stay back.

4.25pm: Voter turnout stands at 53.5 percent, according to EC secretary Kamaruzaman at 3pm. He also denied rumours that the EC had extended the voting hours to 6pm. Polls will close at 5pm.

2.35pm: PKR vice-president Azmin Ali wants all party supporters to use motorcycles to go to the polling centres due to the massive traffic jams in all roads leading to these centres.

"From the indications we are getting, we are very confident of Anwar's lead," he said.

But he said that traffic gridlock on the narrow roads of the largely rural electorate had disrupted exit polling aimed at determining how voters cast their ballots.

"It is so bad that it's very hard for us to determine accurate exit polls due to the large number of people filling the polling centres and the long jams outside," he told AFP.

2.30pm: A worried-sounding BN candidate Arif Shah urged voters to come out to vote.

2.20pm: Malaysians for Free and Fair Election (Mafrel) spokesperson Ong BK said the election watchdog has recorded three cases of voters' names missing from the electoral roll this morning.

He said these complainants have all voted in the previous elections but could not find their names on the roll today. In one case, the complainant found his name missing despite his wife being allowed to vote.

"We don't know whether this is going to be a pattern as we have to continue to monitor the process until polling is closed" he told Malaysiakini.

1.27pm: The rain has stopped in certain areas, the traffic situation has improved in some parts and voters seem to be taking their time off for lunch first.

1.15pm: All roads leading to voting centres are going nowhere! Traffic has come to a standstill in most parts of Permatang Pauh.

Najib attributed the massive traffic jams at the centres to narrow roads and on voters coming out early to vote.

1pm: Election Commission secretary Kamaruzaman Mohd Noor said voter turnout as at noon was 44.8 percent.

However EC deputy chief Wan Ahmad Wan Omar told Malaysiakini that he estimated the turnout to be at about 53 percent as at 1pm.

scuffle tense situation in permatang pauh by election polling day 260808 0412.55pm:
Eyewitnesses claim of a tense situation at the SMK Penanti polling centre between supporters of BN and PKR over the former's pondok panas which is located very close to the polling centre. [See map]

The situation is still under control but the respective supporters are continuing to trade barbs. The police are keeping a close watch.

12.30pm: Najib says he is happy with the polling so far.

"No untoward incidents so far and everything is under control," he told reporters in Seberang Jaya.

He also visited a BN pondok panas at the polling centre in Seberang Jaya, talking to party workers and volunteers.

12.10pm: As predicted it's raining in Permatang Pauh now!

11.20am: An Election Commission official says that they are not allowed to reveal details of

voter turnout.

"Only EC secretary Kamaruzaman Mohd Noor can give those details," she said when contacted.

Kamaruzaman is presently on his rounds visiting the polling centres.

11.05am: PKR polling agent at SK Seberang Jaya 2 Rodziah Ismail confirmed that there were no discrepancies in the electoral roll used in the polling station. She said that only the pages were different in the roll used today as compared to the previous one.

scuffle tense situation in permatang pauh by election polling day 260808 0511am: The crowd at SK Sri Penanti has dispersed. However, a small group of around 300 still remain a small distance away. Police are keeping a watchful eye on them. No untoward incident has been reported.

10.52am: Third candidate Hanafi Hamat told Malaysiakini that he was on the way to visit a polling station in Kubang Semang.

"I think I have chance to win," he said.

"But even if I lose, it's okay as our message has gone down to the voters. They are aware of our message," he added.

scuffle tense situation in permatang pauh by election polling day 260808 0310.42am: Penang police chief Ayub Yaakob is at the scene at SK Sri Penanti. The crowd is given five minutes to disperse. The FRU are slowly moving the crowd out of the place. PKR information chief Tian Chua is also at the scene, asking the police to give more time for their supporters to be there.

10.30am: A PKR supporter is arrested for allegedly throwing an object to the BN side at SK Sri Penanti polling centre. There are about 1,000 supporters from both BN and Pakatan still gathered at this centre. They are kept afar on either side of a road opposite the centre.

scuffle tense situation in permatang pauh by election polling day 260808 02Eyewitnesses say that there are about 600 Pakatan supporters as opposed to 400 from BN. They are very boisterous. At least nine truck-loads of Federal Reserve Unit personnel are on standby at the place.

10.10am: "I hope to take oath in Parliament tomorrow," said a highly-confident Anwar.

"We are entering Parliament with a clear agenda and they (BN) should wake up with the stark realities of the day."

He said that he was receiving a strong support from the people of Permatang Pauh. He said this in a short five-minute speech after casting his vote.

10.05am: PKR's election bureau deputy director Fuziah Salleh told Malaysiakini that they were checking with the Election Commission on the discrepancy in the voters' list at SK Seberang Jaya 2 polling district.

anwar ibrahim permatang pauh by election polling day 260808 0110am: Anwar and Wan Azizah left after casting their votes. Anwar said that he was confident of winning today.

"It's not Anwar versus the (other) candidates. It's Anwar versus the entire government machinery," he said.

He added that the most important thing was winning.

"As you can see, the groundswell is great. God willing, I'm confident of winning," he added.

He however expressed his fears of vote-counting manipulations.

9.43am: Anwar, accompanied by his wife Dr Wan Azizah, enters the polling centre. He is wearing a long-sleeved blue shirt and a songkok. Wan Azizah will also be casting her vote at SK Sri Penanti.

9.38am: Anwar arrives at SK Seri Penanti. [See map]

9.35am: At SK Sri Penanti, almost all voters are using the PKR line to check their status before voting. Exit poll shows nine out of 10 favoured Anwar.

najib guan eng permatang pauh 260808 029.31am: Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Gerakan acting president Koh Tsu Koon are at SK Seberang Jaya 2 polling centre where they bumped into Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and DAP leader Lim Kit Siang. The political leaders shook hands and exchanged greetings.

However their respective supporters were less cordial, with the Pakatan group shouting 'Altantuya! Liar! Cheater!' at Najib. BN supporters responded by shouting 'Hidup Barisan!'

9.10am: A PKR alert states that the voters' list used in the SK Seberang Jaya 2 polling district is different from that given earlier. It is however learnt that only the page numbers are different, but with the same list of voters.

9.05am: The crowd at SK Sri Penanti has now swelled to about 1,000, with almost two-thirds of them being from Pakatan. They are waiting for Anwar to arrive to vote.

8.45am: BN and Pakatan Rakyat supporters have started gathering at SK Sri Penanti where Anwar will be casting his ballot. About 300 Pakatan supporters have been teasing and mocking their rivals from the BN camp. The 50-odd BN men are also not slow to retort, singing away 'liwat' songs. Pakatan supporters respond by chanting 'Altantuya'.

About 30 voters are also in line to vote here.

8.30am: There are about 70 supporters from both sides at SK Seberang Jaya 2. Anwar supporters are seen wearing Anwar masks, goading the BN supporters. Bantering between the two sets of supporters are jovial and in good mood.

permatang pauh by election 260808 arif shah vote 038.08am: BN's Arif Shah is among the earliest to vote. His polling centre at SK Seberang Jaya 2 is close by to his house. He told reporters that he was confident of winning today. [See map]

"I voted at 8.08am as eight is a good number for me," he told reporters with a beaming smile. His wife, Latifah Asmawi, and son, Izwan Shah, also cast their votes with him.

8am: Polling starts. Almost all polling centres have voters milling around to vote early.

7.30am: It's polling day in Permatang Pauh, with a total of 58,459 voters who can vote to determine their chosen elected parliamentarian.

The contest to be the elected MP is among PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim, Barisan Nasional's Arif Shah Omar Shah and little known Hanafi Hamat from Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (Akim).

This has been Anwar's fort since 1982 and in his absence in the past 10 years, the seat has been held for him by his wife and PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

The by-election is necessitated by Wan Azizah's decision to vacate the seat in July 31, to allow her husband a way back into the Parliament.

Permatang Pauh has three state seats under it - the BN-held Seberang Jaya, PKR's Penanti and PAS' Permatang Pasir. Arif is also the state representative in Seberang Jaya.

There are 25 polling centres, with 110 polling stream - all opened for voting since 8am. They will remain open until 5pm.

The weather in Permatang Pauh is clear and sunny. However, rain is expected later in the day. Voters are being reminded to be ready with their umbrellas and raincoats.

It has been constantly raining in the evenings in this constituency for the past week.

Heavy traffic is also anticipated throughout the day, especially with the narrow, kampung roads that dot most part of the constituency.

The police have also closed some roads in the constituency for better traffic management.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi reminded voters at his ceramah last night to come out early to vote.

PKR's Anwar Ibrahim is expected to cast his vote at Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Sri Penanti at about 9am while his rival Arif Shah Omar Shah from BN will be voting at SK Seberang Jaya 2.

The third candidate, Hanafi, is not a voter from here.

Some 400 voters had been waiting at SK Seri Menanti, one of the key polling stations, since early morning to cast their ballots.

Both PKR and BN have also identified several measures to lure voters to come out to vote today. Both sides have placed volunteers to ferry voters to the polling centres. Umbrellas are also on stand-by for the voters in case of a sudden downpour.

Arif Shah's Umno has deployed some 5,000 volunteers to help out in the by-election. Both Umno and PKR are also preparing food for the voters.

The rival parties have also set up their own websites for their supporters to monitor the situation today.

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