

**BN concedes humiliating defeat**  
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The Barisan Nasional ruling coalition has admitted defeat in a by-election against opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim who will return to parliament after a decade-long absence.  
MCPX

muhammad mohd taib mat taib "Yes, of course, we have lost... we were the underdogs going into this race," said Umno information chief Muhammad Muhd Taib.

Anwar's PKR, which leads a three-member opposition alliance, claimed a "landslide" victory. It said Anwar had garnered at least 65 percent of the ballot and that the figure could rise as high as 70 percent.

"We declare victory, the margin is very huge," said PKR information chief Tian Chua.

permatang pauh by election results map 260808 Muhammad said Umno had been hampered by internal disagreement over the choice of its candidate in the by-election, Arif Shah Omah Shah, and was distracted by upcoming internal leadership polls.

**Dismissed talk of defections**

"There are factors that we have to be practical about but this does not mean that he is enjoying full support elsewhere in the country," he told AFP.

"He is the winner here because this is his hometown and the timing of the elections is to his advantage because Umno's party polls will be held in a month."

Muhammad also dismissed talk that the victory would help Anwar oust the government with the help of defecting lawmakers, after landmark March general elections that handed the opposition unprecedented gains.

"I don't think so. In the last general election, the people gave the Barisan Nasional the mandate to rule, so if the opposition wants to form a government they will have to wait for the next general election."

At a brief press conference in the wake of the defeat, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said the Permatang Pauh by-election showed democracy 'was still alive' in the country and was not being manipulated as claimed by certain quarters.

He congratulated Anwar on the landslide victory.