

Permatang Pauh: What BN leaders say
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 27, 2008
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After a gruelling 10-day campaign, PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim won the Permatang Pauh by-election with a bigger-than-expected majority of 15,671 votes. He polled 31,195 votes, nearly twice the number obtained by BN candidate Arif Shah Omar Shah.
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Following are reactions from several Barisan Nasional parliamentarians. While some were resigned to his re-entry into the August house, others gladly welcomed the former deputy prime minister back to the political arena.

Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz, minister in Prime Minister's Department

I expected him to win. It is his hometown... he is the local boy. Never once I doubted he will come in (to Parliament). I like it because now what he wants to say can be debated in Parliament rather than him speaking outside as we haven't been able to reply.

sapp chua soon bui nazri abdul aziz parliament 070708 03It will be a normal day (tomorrow) but we expect more people than usual. Of course, not everybody can get in and some might be unhappy. After all, he is going to be in here for more than four years.

It will be business as usual. The seat is still there - we haven't removed it - it's been there since (Opposition Leader Wan) Azizah (Wan Ismail) left, nobody has sat there.

Anwar has got strong support in Permatang Pauh just like I got my strong support in Padang Rengas as it is my hometown. Permatang Pauh has always been an opposition fort. Anwar grabbed it from PAS Zabidi (Ali) in the 1980s, so he has been very popular there. Even when he was not the MP, his wife got in although she was not a local.

(On Sept 16) I'm still waiting. In fact, this morning I woke up to check whether I'm still a minister - that is why I came a bit late today, but the government has not crumbled yet.

Ahmad Shabery Cheek, information minister

I hope with Anwar's presence, the Dewan would be more disciplined so that the public can see for themselves that the man who aims to the prime minister one day would be able to educate members of parliament, in particular opposition parliamentarians - especially those who are inexperienced - to be more disciplined and organised.

shabery chikThe live telecast of the parliamentary proceeding will go on as usual and nothing will disrupt the telecast of the question-and-answer session tomorrow. Anwar, as an experienced parliamentarian, is expected to play a vital role in contributing to discussions and debate sessions.

And in regards to his win in Permatang Pauh, I think all those in BN don't have to feel sad as that constituency has always been Anwar's base and stronghold for a long time. And it is not like he won BN's seat. (There's) no reason at all to be sad.

I say this because many opined that Anwar's victory threatens BN, but there is nothing to fear as that constituency was never BN's.

For PKR, the by-election is like 'life or death'. However for BN, it was just another seat which was not Barisan's. It does not affect the leadership as Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi is still the Kepala Batas MP and Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is Pekan MP.

Rafidah Aziz, Kuala Kangsar MP and Umno Wanita chief

We have done our very best and the people have made their choice. To me, it is now very important to recognise the fact that in any by-election or general election, the government and the Elections Commission have always be very transparent and let the process of democracy run.

rafidah aziz pc on permatang pauh by election 010808 03So this has been proven, and it has been proven time and time again. I hope after this time nobody will bring up the matter of anyone conspiring against them to make them lose... I mean it's quite sickening sometimes.

We know the people have the right to choose and of course, BN will do its very best to get people to support us and the opposition will also do their very best.

It has always been known that the opposition will take this opportunity (parliament session) to be rowdy... I wouldn't be surprised if he (Anwar) becomes the factor for more rowdiness. I hope his supporters will not take advantage of his presences here to cause a furore because to me it is not proper.

Parliament is about maintaining decorum and I never subscribed to any rudeness or bad behaviour. BN or opposition - it does not matter - everything must be done in decorum and professionally as parliamentarians.

Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Penang BN chairman and Gerakan acting president

The defeat in the Permatang Pauh by-elections yesterday was another wake-up call for the BN.

BN and its various component parties must review and revive its policies and programmes to enable BN to continue to be relevant, especially to the younger generations.

koh tsu koon wawasan university 220906 ponderWhile the by-election results showed the preference of the Permatang Pauh voters, BN must also take serious note that it may well be reflective of the overall perception and feeling of Malaysians elsewhere.

BN must acknowledge and address the people's dissatisfaction and even disenchantment with the establishment for what was perceived as a lack of commitment, communication and concrete results, especially in the past two years.

Gerakan will proceed with our own internal reforms, while pushing for major reforms within the BN and the government. Gerakan will continue to be a voice of the people within and outside the BN. We will also push for viable solutions.

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