

In that case, give us a walkover
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Athi Veerangan

PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim returned fire at Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's complaint that the enforced Penanti by-election was 'a waste of public resources' by suggesting that Pakatan Rakyat be given a walkover.

"We will heed the call from the prime minister that we shall not waste public resources.

"I call upon the BN and Umno leadership not to field any candidate against PKR in the Penanti by-election and give us a walkover.

"It will not only save taxpayers' money, time and energy, but also will be consistent with the premier's statement," Opposition Leader Anwar said when addressing some 500 party members in his Permatang Pauh parliamentary constituency tonight.

He also fired a broadside at Najib for suggesting that PKR was playing a political game by forcing the Penanti by-election, by taking a swipe at Umno-engineered power grab in Perak early this year.

"Isn't that a political game?" he asked the crowded hall in Yayasan Aman, Penanti.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Najib criticised PKR for playing political games at the time when the nation should be united in focusing on solving the global economic crisis.

He said that Pakatan was forcing people to endure another by-election with the resignation of former Penang Deputy Chief Minister I Mohammad Fairus Khairuddin as the Penanti state representative.

The upcoming Penanti by-election would be the sixth to be held since last year's general election in March, after Permatang Pauh, Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Gantang parliamentary, Bukit Selambau and Batang Ai state by-elections.

So far the score chart stands at PKR with two wins, PAS two and PRS/BN one. Umno, which contested three of the five by-elections, has yet to win a single by-election, an all-time poor record for the ruling party.

Proper and correct for Fairus to resign

Anwar justified Fairus' resignation as 'proper and correct' given the circumstances that he was entangled in graft investigation by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

"He may not be charged, but the party and public interests must come first.

"I respect his wish to resign and the party will protect and safeguard his interests. We will provide the necessary legal defence for his case," he said.

Mohammad Fairus tendered his resignation as the elected representative on Thursday, paving way for a by-election to be held within the next 60 days.

The Election Commission is scheduled to announce on April 24 the status of the state assembly seat and the date for the by-election if a vacancy occurred.

The Penanti seat falls under the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat, a PKR political fort in Penang.

Anwar also indicated that the PKR candidate for Penanti would be the likely party nominee for the DCM 1 and executive councillor post vacated by Fairus in Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng state cabinet.

"Of course, it should be endorsed by the CM and agreed by other Pakatan partners, although in political process, the party decides on it," he said, hinting that the candidate would be a senior Penang-born leader.

State PKR deputy chief and former Universiti Sains Malaysia lecturer Dr Mansor Othman, 59, is the hot favourite to be pick as candidate for the contest.

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