

Anwar: I did not interfere

If it were up to me, I would have delayed decision, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Following continued criticism over the decision in Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's court case, the Prime Minister has reiterated that he does not have the power to interfere.

"If you ask me, if I had the power, I would have delayed the decision until after all the by-elections were done," said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim of the twin by-elections in Johor and an upcoming one in Pahang in which his coalition Pakatan Harapan is involved.

"After (the elections), then let the AGC continue with its work," Anwar told reporters here yesterday in response to allegations that he had something to do with how the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC) conducted Ahmad Zahid's High Court case.

Speaking to reporters after Friday prayers yesterday, Anwar revealed some of the discussions he had with former attorney general Tan Sri Idrus Harun which led to the prosecution's decision.

"The AG did not agree to postpone their application to the court



Nice to meet you: Anwar greeting congregants at the Masjid Jamek Sri Petaling in Kuala Lumpur. - MUHAMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI/The Star

because the trial dates were on Sept 4, but his last day in office was on Sept 5.

"He wanted to finish his responsibility and he did not want to relinquish his responsibility to someone else. I could not stop him from doing so," Anwar said.

- He said he did not blame the public for seeking clarification over how the case was conducted.

"I have asked for further expla-

nation from the AG, so I don't blame the public from wanting one also.

"But if we read the 11 reasons the AGC presented to the court, the judge was satisfied with it. We cannot blame the court for its process," he added.

Pakatan's rival, Perikatan Nasional, has claimed that the court decision would boost its chances in the Simpang Jeram

state and Pulai parliamentary by-elections today.

The court had granted Ahmad Zahid, the Deputy Prime Minister, a discharge not amounting to an acquittal on 47 charges of criminal breach of trust regarding funds from his foundation, Yayasan Akalbudi.

The court's decision was driven by the AGC's application for a discharge even after the prosecution had established a prima facie case against him.

The AGC has been criticised by legal experts and criminal lawyers who questioned why the prosecution decided to discontinue after it had proven a prima facie case and called 99 witnesses.

The court decision reignited allegations that Anwar had made a deal with Ahmad Zahid, both of whom led rival coalitions in the general election last year, to drop the case in exchange for the latter's support for Anwar to become prime minister.