

Anwar pulls in the crowd
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PKR advisor Anwar Ibrahim may be banned from active politics but he still remains a crowd puller.

Last night, thousands turned up to hear the deputy premier, known for his oratorical skills, speak at several places in Machap.

He kept the crowd captivated with his trademark humour and wit as he lent support to DAP candidate Liou Cheng Kuang, who is taking on BN's Lai Meng Chong in today's by-election for the Machap state seat.

The seat fell vacant following the death of BN incumbent Poh Ah Tiam on March 15.

"Malam ini benar-benar nak lawan (we will really fight tonight)," said Anwar during his speech in the predominantly Chinese Machap Umboo area.

"If you want a representative to speak up for you, vote DAP because I have seen MCA representatives sitting quietly in meetings when I was still a minister.

"DAP members like (Parliamentary Opposition Leader) Lim Kit Siang and (secretary-general) Lim Guan Eng used to give me headaches (then)," he said.

Najib targetted

Anwar also targetted Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak whom he linked to multi-million dollar commissions from defence contracts and Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu's murder.

"Najib should set an example for the people but instead, he is perpetuating how leaders get away with things and with the rakyat's money.

"We cannot blame him, we must blame ourselves for being stupid enough to vote for him and Umno," he said.

Meanwhile, Anwar also claimed that Umno had approached him in Machap asking him to join the party as his chances of becoming prime minister is high.

"I told them that I've joined PKR and I'm supporting DAP, you're too late," he said.

"I've sat in jail long enough to know better. Now I'm out, I want to fight for the people and fight for the rights of all Malaysians," he added to a thunderous applause.

He then joked that it feels like he is contesting for the Machap seat but stressed that he was in town because he believed the DAP candidate can make a difference.

Islam Hadhari

In the predominantly Malay area of Melaka Pindah, Anwar's tone changed when addressing issues related to race and religion.

He told the crowd that the New Economic Policy had lost its use because rural Malays did not benefit from it.

"All you see are rich Umno leaders and their families while we have to scrape through," he said.

As for religion, Anwar touched on the controversial M Moorthy case and said Islam has skewed from its original meaning in this country.

"What is Islam Hadhari? Does practising Islam mean more corruption, higher petrol prices, more press restriction and lower quality of education?" he asked.

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