

Police crash opposition ceramah again
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As the Ijok by-election campaign passes its midway mark, police have stopped more opposition ceramah (political talk) yesterday leaving residents and opposition politicians fuming.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail has urged the police to be non-partisan in allowing her party to hold such gatherings.

She was stopped from speaking last night in Batang Berjuntai, as police cited traffic concerns and an Umno function nearby as their reasons for doing so.

"Party members have been threatened with arrests by the police during ceramah... but when our members are threatened with bodily harm by Barisan Nasional workers, nothing is done (by the police) to stop this," she said in the statement.

Riot police deployed to disperse the large crowd that had gathered were met with jeers.

Sources indicate that at least three opposition ceramah were stopped last night - these were to have featured opposition heavyweights and DAP elected representatives.

Altogether six ceramah had been halted by the police to date, with three events cancelled on Monday.

Lim's speech stopped halfway

DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang claimed that last night was the first time in his political career that he had ever been stopped by the police halfway through a speech.

"I have seen so many by-elections over the past 40 years and never have we needed to ask for a permit to hold a ceramah. What kind of standards are the police practising?" he said when contacted today.

Even PKR advisor Anwar Ibrahim was not spared. His ceramah in Ladang Tuan Mee was stopped soon after it started because the organiser had allegedly failed to obtain a permit [see video below].

"It's okay. We'll apply for a permit and come back tomorrow. We'll see how many permits they will reject," he told a small crowd of estate workers who had gathered.

At a later event in Pekan Ijok, Anwar urged the police to refer to the election laws and not use the Police Act to stop political speeches from being held.

Under the Police Act, public gatherings require 14 days' notice and are subject to police approval.

This by-election, however, only has a nine-day campaign period. Barisan Nasional's K Parthiban will face PKR's Khalid Ibrahim on polling day, Saturday.

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