

BN warms up for final dash with more disclosures
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With the campaign moving close to the finish line, BN is training its guns squarely on PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Leading the pack in Merlimau Utara last night was yet another PKR turncoat - Mohd Fairus Kharuddin (left), Penang's former deputy chief minister - who stepped down in 2009 following allegations of graft, and later cleared by the anti-corruption commission.

Like the other former PKR lot who are sweating buckets for the BN campaign, Fairus's speech focused on one thing - the destruction of PAS claims that its candidate will stand up for Islam.

But if the others went on a barrage against PAS, claiming that the Islamic party was espousing deviant and radical teachings, Fairus, who held the highest position in government among the turncoats, adopted a more subtle approach.

While his revelation may have appeared to target Anwar, the audience of 200, who were mostly lower middle class urban Malay, seemed to harbour seeds of doubt.

This even included the fence-sitters, with some having come from listening to a Pakatan talk nearby.

"The PAS machinery worked very hard to win Penang, but in the end... (when other parties won a slew with their help) they only won one seat, and it is one they have defended for three terms.

"So they asked if their representatives can be made executive councillor, but this was rejected," Fairus said, painting a weak picture of the party.

'Anwar betrayed PAS'

He claimed that Penang PAS then lobbied for their representative to then be appointed the chief of the Penang Islamic Council (MAIP), but was also rejected, this time by Anwar, even before Fairus took the matter to the exco.

"After giving all sorts of excuses, (Anwar) finally said, 'PAS ni kalau beri betis nak paha. Mereka ni puak-puak melampau. Perak, Kedah, Kelantan dah dapat, apa pasal sini pun nak juga?'," he said.

(PAS will always want more than they are given, they are just too much. They already have Perak, Kedah and Kelantan so why should want something here too?)

"If he can't even give this to a coalition member that worked hard for his win in Permatang Pauh, then what will he give to you? Your vote for PAS will be a waste," he told the audience also made up of single mothers who received aid at the end of the night.

If PAS candidate Yuhaizad Abdullah wins, he will be the only PAS and Muslim assemblyperson from Pakatan Rakyat in the Malacca assembly.

Taboo topics and wishes

Less than 10km away, Pakatan Rakyat leaders commanded a crowd of about 500 in successive speeches from prominent leaders like PKR's Tian Chua and Azmin Ali, speaking alongside local leaders like DAP Kota Melaka assemblyperson Sim Tong Him.

Spilling onto the roadside, the crowd stood for hours despite the tempting the smell of good food wafting through from the 1Malaysia NGO dinner next door, which was attended by about 1,000 people, exclusively Indian.

At the dinner, most adults raised their hands when asked if they were voters, and they answered with a rousing "BN" when asked by Malacca Chief Minister Mohd Ali Rustam who they would vote for.

While Mohd Ali used the NGO stage to deflect Pakatan's attacks on his government, repeating the now often heard jokes and anecdotes, the crowd outside was asked to think beyond Merlimau.

Even seemingly old issues managed to get the crowd going, with many appreciating Pakatan's gumption in bringing up some so-called taboo matters.

PKR Negri Sembilan leader Badrul Hisham Shaharin, fresh from campaigning in Kerdu, was a crowd pleaser.

Cheers and applause were heard when he sang a few verses from a children's song in Mandarin, to prove that Malaysians don't need 1Malaysia to be united, but it was his bold question that got the loudest hoots.

"Can (Prime Minister) Najib (Abdul Razak) tell us who killed Altantuya?" he asked.

But the highlight of the night was DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, who despite Mohd Ali next door claiming that Lim was past his use-by date, was the crowd favourite.

Lim, (front row second from left in photo) who turned 70 last week, was serenaded with a birthday song sung in four different languages.

Capping the night, the opposition stalwart said that in 2008, his birthday wish was for the opposition to take over Penang and for his son to lead that state government.

With those wishes granted, he is now wishing for good news in Merlimau and Kerdu.