

Zahid: We'll defend Najib to our death
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Umno vice-president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi on Saturday vowed to defend party president Najib Abdul Razak to his last breath.

"If anyone wants to topple Najib, they would have to cross over the body of this person in front of you.

"We will have to defend him. The blood that flows in his veins is the (second Prime Minister) Abdul Razak (Hussein)'s blood, the blood of a warrior who defended us, Umno, the BN and the rakyat," he said.

Ahmad Zahid, (left) who is also defence minister, delivered his stirring pledge at an event hosted by BN Merlimau Pasir to a dismal turnout of about 100 people.

He was speaking alongside Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Maslan.

They are part of a large entourage of cabinet ministers and top BN leaders who have come to Merlimau in the final lap of the campaign in a state seat which has been a BN stronghold.

Merlimau Pasir is also where a multipurpose hall named after BN candidate Roslan Ahmad's father stands and where his family home is located.

Erdogan sees Najib as a brother

According to Ahmad Zahid, Najib, who is also prime minister, did not "rock the boat", and is currently continuing and improving the policies of former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi after taking over two years ago.

As such, he said, it is ridiculous for Pakatan Rakyat to say that Najib should get the boot like the ousted leaders of Tunisia and Egypt.

Like others who spoke on the BN side in Merlimau, Ahmad Zahid went on the offensive against PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, this time roping in the Turkish government.

The minister said that Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan called Najib his "brother", instead of the usual protocol address of "your excellency" during Najib's recent visit to the European country.

He said that Anwar had misled the people into thinking that the Turkish government is on his side, as the Turkey foreign minister, whom the PKR man said he is close to, said he last spoke to Anwar was more than a year ago.

He said the government also corrected Ankara's perception that the ongoing case against Anwar is a continuation of Sodomy I.

"I explained to them that it is a different complaint and it is sexual harassment against an employee," he said.

Poor turnout alarm for BN

Ahmad Zahid was expected to share the stage in Merlimau Pasir with Ummi Hafilda Ali, a witness in Sodomy I who has hit both the campaign trails in Merlimau and Kerbau on behalf of the BN.

However, Ummi, who attracted about 200 people in Chinchin on Thursday, was said to have chosen to spin her yarns about Anwar's wild scandals at the Ayer Merbau event instead.

former PAS vice-president Mohamad Sabu in Chinchin About 500 metres down the road, PAS attracted about 600 people who stood, squatted and sat on the dirt in the dark to listen to popular former PAS vice-president Mohamad Sabu.

Speaking in his trademark deadpan humour style, Mohamad drove home the message that criticising Umno does not mean criticising the government nor is it about going against development.

The marked difference in crowd size may indicate higher support for PAS candidate Yuhaizad Abdullah at the polls on March 6.

It also raises questions about the strength of the Umno machinery, which early into the campaign faced hurdles with several factions of Umno Jasin threatening a boycott as they were unhappy with the candidate selection.

A DAP event featuring Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng drew what looked like a larger crowd than the pro-BN 1Malaysia NGO free dinner-and-dance show, despite the party charging RM30 per head for dinner.

However, it was unclear how many of those in attendance were actually Merlimau voters as several who spoke to Malaysiakini said that they were from neighbouring constituencies.

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