

**BN, Pakatan go head to head in ceramah war**  
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The ceramah circuit remained lively in Rumpun Makmur as both BN and Pakatan Rakyat continued in what is being dubbed as the 'battle of two ceramahs' to woo voters in the area in the run-up to the Kerbau by-election tomorrow.

After a rousing performance led by opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim on Thursday, it was BN's turn to try to scrap a morale boost last night when they engaged the services of Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali and popular 1960s artist M Daud Kilau.

The night started relatively slow with the Pakatan camp doing their best not to be drowned out by the huge, concert-quality PA system that were blaring at the BN's campaign venue just across the road.

The crowd turnout this time round was much smaller than on the previous night event – when Anwar went head-to-head with Umami Hafilda Ali – with an even split of a little over 400 people between the two camps.

When former staunch Anwar loyalist, senator Ezam Mohd Nor, took to the podium, he failed to coax a more spirited response from the BN ceramah-goers as the crowd at the Pakatan camp periodically broke into chants of "Reformasi" and "Hidup, Hidup, Hidup Rakyat", among other slogans.

It took Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali to break the deadlock between the competing camps.

Using his trademark abrasive oratory, the controversial Pasir Mas parliamentarian managed to draw the attention of crowds at the Pakatan ceramah who began ignoring their own speakers to respond to his many allegations and sometimes aberrations.

Ibrahim managed to pull their strings reminiscent of the desperate antics of a roadside medicine man by declaring that his "ubat" (medicine) is more miraculous than whatever "the other side" can ever hope to offer.

Employing almost aphrodisiacal metaphors he said, at point "I'm very sure my 'ubat' is more miraculous, helps you last longer and hits harder than they can," he quipped, to the amusement of the BN crowd.

**Non-stop needling**

From then on, almost every claim made by the independent MP was met by jeers from the mostly youth supporters in the PAS camp.

Most of his speech was humour-tinged rhetoric, but he made it fairly obvious that he was targeting Anwar and PAS, with which he has a long and less-than-friendly past.

At one point, Ibrahim provoked Pakatan supporters into an uproar when he hit out at Anwar, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and deputy president Nasharudin Mat Isa all in the same breath.

"Before he was kicked out (of the government), Anwar always praised (former premier) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad), saying 'There is no statesman greater than Mahathir'.

"What does Hadi know (about Anwar)? What does Nasharudin know?" he said, referring to Anwar who is now a sworn enemy of the former prime minister.

There were loud jeers and shouts from the other side of the road. The Pakatan camp returned the salvo by chanting "Lompat, Lompat, Lompat Katak", referring to his political past of jumping between several parties before turning independent.

In an immediate response, Ibrahim responded by saying that there are many among Pakatan's leaders who were worse 'frogs' than him.

"It's typical from that side. When they are not satisfied, dia orang lompat lah (they will jump)," he said, earning cheers and jeers, equally.

kerdau bn ceramah - daud kilau gelekThe icing on the cake for BN came after Ibrahim ended his ceramah, and serving up 1960s pop icon M Daud Kilau (left) to entertain the assembled crowd.

Daud Kilau, popularly known as Raja Gelek, was a huge draw as the BN crowd quickly swelled by another 100 people clamouring to see the famous Malay singer.

The campaign will reach its finale today, as both sides are expected to make a final charge to reach out to as many voters before the cooling-off period starts at midnight

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