

But smooth sailing for Anwar in Pahang Felda scheme

MalaysiaKini.com

February 18, 2012

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It was all smooth sailing yesterday during opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's foray into a Felda settlement in the Malay heartland of Pahang, smack in the backyard of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Unlike Anwar's recent tumultuous reception at the federal land development scheme's settlement in Machap, Malacca, the settlers of the Felda Bukit Damar settlement in Lancang, Pahang greeted him with open arms.

Over 300 people, including some Orang Asli villagers, greeted Anwar's arrival and cheered rousingly during his speech.

PAS, PKR and DAP flags and banners decked the roads leading to and at the venue of his ceramah, the house of a party supporter.

Anwar spent about an hour speaking and mingling with settlers, with no trouble on the horizon.

Two police vehicles - a patrol car with two uniformed personnel and a traffic police sports utility vehicle (SUV) with four officers were seen patrolling and monitoring, though they took no action.

Anwar took his chance to address several issues of note to the mostly Malay crowd.

He defended his Israel remark, accusing Umno of twisting his words and taking his Mumbai interview with the Asian Wall Street Journal out of context.

"Utusan Malaysia... They did not learn English properly, they do not understand what I said (during the interview)," he quipped.

Anwar explained that he only said that he will accept the state of Israel if they ensure the rights and lands of the Palestinians are safeguarded, the caveat left out by Umno-friendly media.

The opposition leader also lambasted "stupid ustaz" he claimed are "paid by Umno" to spread slander against him.

He also hit out at former mentor and most vocal critic, Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I have forgiven him, but he is still at it. He is already old, he should go to the mosque and pray," sniped Anwar.

Serenading the audience

The Permatang Pauh MP also serenaded the audience with his rendition of a popular old pop song 'Madu dan Racun', modifying the lyrics to campaign for their support.

"Madu di tangan kananmu, Pakatan. Racun di tangan kirimu, BN. Aku dah tahu yang mana satu akan jadi pilihanku."

(Honey held in your right hand, Pakatan. Poison held in your left hand, BN. I already know what is my choice in the end.)

Anwar poured more honey into his offer to the crowd by recounting the many annual cash assistance

programmes for the rakyat of Pakatan-controlled states in contrast with the one-off RM500 BR1M payments.

NONEHe mentioned the RM2,500 assistance when a rakyat passed away, the senior citizens cash award, university entrance awards and others in Pakatan ruled states.

"We give after elections, BN gives before elections... That is only when we control states. If we control the federal government. I don't want to promise much, but firstly I shall reduce the price of fuel... The rest, Inshaallah (God willing) we shall give."

In the conclusion to his speech, he said that he is now on the warpath and is ready to contend toe-to-toe with BN for Putrajaya.

"This is the last time I come here as opposition leader. Next time I come I will be holding another post," he concluded to cheers from the crowd.

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