

'Let BN eat eggs' in Penang
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From a Hollywood-style reception for VVIPs to the launch of a new campaign featuring hornbill mascot 'Ubah', Penang DAP got down to the serious business of accumulating funds for its general election machinery.

Multi-coloured balloons and little red flags bearing Ubah's message of change lent a festive air to a 300-table fund-raising dinner last night, which also featured songs in Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese.

The overriding message in the speeches was to prevent BN from regaining Penang in the next election.

Secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said Pakatan Rakyat could retain the state if 40 percent of the Malay community and 90 percent of the Chinese throw their support behind the coalition which won the state in March 2008.

"If we can, let the BN eat eggs (read: get zero seats) this time," he said to resounding applause and cheers.

He also thanked those who had helped fend off a hostile group that had disrupted a rally in support of Himpunan Hijau 2.0 in Penang last month.

PAS deputy president Mohamed Sabu said he would rather have a brother in Guan Eng than "corrupted" Umno members.

Party adviser Lim Kit Siang, who was in top form, hailed PKR's Nurul Izzah Anwar as the "brightest" MP in Pakatan and a likely candidate for prime minister in future.

Apart from 'recycling' election pledges, including the abolition of highway toll charges and giving senior citizens RM1,000 annually, party leaders highlighted the pending resignation of federal minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil over the National Feedlot Corporation scandal.

The highlight of the event was when Guan Eng got the entire crowd to stand up as a show of support for the 6.5km Gurney Drive-Bagan Ajam undersea tunnel to address traffic congestion.

NGOs like the Consumers Association of Penang have criticised the state government for not carrying out a public consultation before embarking on the mega-project.

RM500,000 collected

State DAP head Chow Kon Yeow boasted about the party's ability to collect RM500,000 in donations - one of the largest collections in its history.

More than its allies in Pakatan Rakyat, the DAP has invested resources in targeting two groups of voters - Malays and the youth.

It was no coincidence that Guan Eng's political secretary Zairil Mohd Khir was chosen as emcee for the dinner.

Zairil, who had his early education in Penang, is fluent in English, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese and is tipped to contest the 13th general election in the state.

During the event, he showed off his public speaking skills and tried to impress the 3,000-strong crowd

with his knowledge of current affairs.

Three Indian Malaysian party leaders were conspicuous by their absence - national chairperson Karpal Singh, Seri Delima assemblyperson RSN Rayer and Bagan Dalam representative A Tanasekharan.

Speculation was rife that the trio had "boycotted" the dinner, following their recent differences with party colleague and Deputy Chief Minister II P Ramasamy, leading to disciplinary proceedings that cleared him of any wrongdoing.

State executive councillor Phee Boon Poh ended the talk by explaining that the trio had "prior engagements".

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