

Women paint PJ purple in demanding clean governance

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By Leven Woon

The streets of Petaling Jaya, Selangor today was hit by a wave of purple as an estimated 4,000 mostly women marched from two locations to demand for clean governance.

women's day rally 180312 Wearing purple shirts and white gloves, the crowd gathered at two separate meeting points - Taman Jaya lake and Section 14's Masjid Tun Abdul Aziz at around 2pm amidst a light drizzle.

They shouted slogans like "Hidup, hidup, hidup wanita; tolak, tolak, tolak, tolak rasuah" (Long live women, reject corruption), and held placards against corruption and women discrimination.

The rally was organised by Wanita Suara Perubahan (Wanitasupermy), a coalition of 15 NGOs, to voice their six-point demand and also to celebrate the recent International Women Day on Mar 8.

superwomen rally 180312 15 At about a quarter to 3pm, the protesters began their march to Padang Astaka from the two locations, to the curious gaze of oncoming motorists while the traffic police stood idly by.

The police estimated the crowd size to be 1,800.

The protestors arrived at the destination, which was decorated with purple balloons, to the loud beat of drums and the organiser on the stage greeting them, "Welcome, ladies!"

In her address, Empower Malaysia's programme officer Janarthani Arumugam urged the women to make a change in the upcoming general election.

"We have already gotten too bored with the (political rhetoric), we want (the politicians) to listen to us immediately.

"We want a better standard of living and we don't want taxpayers' money to be wasted on cows, corruptions and (diamond) rings!" she sneered, poking fun at a series of recent scandals afflicting BN leaders and their kin.

Stop calling us 'lain-lain'

superwomen rally 180312 13 Also joining the rally were some 20 members of Peninsular Aborigines Villages Network, whose representative Fatimah Bahsin told the protesters in her speech how Malaysian Orang Asli women are being marginalised.

"We are marginalised because many of the Orang Asli women are not well educated.

"But we can do a better job if compared with many educated women," she told a cheering crowd.

Fatimah also urged the government to endorse the Orang Asli's native customary land so that they can earn a living, and to officially recognise their ethnicity as 'Orang Asli'.

"We don't want to be called 'lain-lain' (others) any more!" she said.

superwomen rally 180312 teoh lee lan In a press conference later, Wanitasupermy spokesperson Adriene

Leong said women will bear the brunt of widespread corruption as they are already in a disadvantaged position in areas such as education, job prospects and healthcare.

"If (government officers) abuse their power, the funds cannot be channelled to the right places. Women will then suffer the most.

"Take a vivid example: today many women fear to walk out in the streets because the crime rate is high. If the government allocations could be used properly, public safety could be ensured and street crime would go down," she said.

'Selangor gov't facilitated rally'

Meanwhile, a number of Pakatan representatives, such as Seputeh MP Teresa Kok, Batu MP Tian Chua, Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar, Puchong MP Gobind Singh Deo, Pandamaran assemblyperson Ronnie Liu and Batu Tiga rep Rodziah Ismail also attended the rally.

women's day rally 180312Rodziah, when delivering her speech on stage on behalf of the Pakatan leaders, told the protesters that the rally in Padang Astaka was made possible only because of the Selangor government.

The Selangor exco said the government has made positive changes so desired by the people.

"In the next general election we also need to change, but only to change the BN regime," she said in a politically-charged speech.

The organisers concluded the rally by engaging the protesters to dance to the popular Bollywood song, Jai Ho, which they said represents hopes and dreams.

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