

Bid to assault vendor during Alor Setar PKR event

MalaysiaKini.com

April 06, 2012

By Susan Loone

A group of 50 people wearing black T-shirts with the word 'Perkasa' on them, disrupted a PKR event in Alor Setar today.

The group arrived at about 5pm and tried to push into the crowd which had gathered to witness the launch of the Alor Setar PKR community centre in the heart of the city.

Opposition leader and PKR supremo Anwar Ibrahim was scheduled to speak at about 5.30pm.

When the commotion began, shoppers from the Sentosa Mall next door rushed out to see what was happening.

Several individuals were caught in the maelstrom when PKR supporters tried to stop the hostile group from marching forward.

A vendor from the mall, who was among the crowd, said he was nearly hit on his head with a 0.6m-long stick.

Ray Ching, 28 (left), said when he tried to stop several of the men from advancing on the crowd, a man wearing a 'Perkasa' T-shirt raised a stick to hit him.

"The man missed hitting my head because I blocked the thrust with my hand. I scolded him and asked him to leave, he shouted back 'babi'," Ching, a mobile phone vendor, told MalaysiaKini.

PKR banners replaced with BN's

Alor Setar PKR committee member Gooi Hsiao Leung said the group had started "disrupting" the party event since early this morning.

"We started putting up our party flags at about 3.45am, but they were all taken down later and replaced with Barisan Nasional flags," he said when met at the venue.

"A car belonging to one of our state Youth members - Zamry Zakaria - was sprayed with the word 'ABAI', meaning 'Asalkan Bukan Anwar Ibrahim' (as long as it is not Anwar Ibrahim)," added Gooi, who contested for the Alor Setar parliamentary seat in 2008 and lost to MCA's Chor Chee Heung by a narrow margin.

Meanwhile, the group left the event after shouting several anti-Anwar slogans when the police appeared about 20 minutes later.

Anwar arrived from Seberang Jaya about 20 minutes after the situation became calm and managed to present his speech without any disturbance.

In recent months, ceramah and rallies have become increasingly tense as both sides of the political divide prepare for an anticipated early general election.

Violent trend in ceramahs

There had been several incidents where Pakatan events were disrupted by a hostile group.

anwar car damaged by stone throwing umno supporters in sembrong 3Last month saw an attempted

attack on Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah during a ceramah in Gambang, Pahang, while Anwar's vehicle (left) was damaged during a ceramah in Sembrong, Johor.

Even BN leaders are not spared - recently Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong, who made a surprise appearance at a rally in Kajang for Chinese education, was almost hit by a participant.

In February, two journalists were assaulted in a scuffle during the anti-Lynas rally organised in support of Himpunan Hijau in George Town.

At a press conference later, Anwar said such incidences, where events organised by Pakatan Rakyat are disrupted, appear to be a trend among Umno members.

"Their president (Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak) is afraid to debate with me but his underlings (orang bawahan) carry out violent acts against others," he told reporters.

"They say debating is not our culture... so are scolding people, disrupting their events and violence our culture?" he queried.

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