

PKR holds mammoth pre-polls fund-raising dinner
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By Koh Jun Lin

Ahead of widely-anticipated elections, PKR held a fundraising dinner last night at the posh One World Hotel in Bandar Utama, Selangor.

Despite ticket prices ranging from RM150 to as high as RM10,000 per head, about 1,500 guests showed up at the hotel's grand ballroom.

Among the PKR heavyweights at the dinner were *de facto* leader Anwar Ibrahim, his wife and party president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, and Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim.

Also present as DAP and PAS representatives are Kepong MP Tan Seng Giaw and PAS vice-president Husam Musa.

In his speech thanking for the contributions, PKR treasurer-general William Leong said many more guests had to be turned away because the hall was already filled to its maximum capacity of 151 tables.

"We are now at the gates of change. One final push is what is needed to free Malaysians and to free our families," he told the multiracial crowd.

"They say that one drop of water to a man dying of thirst is worth more than a million; Malaysians are dying of thirst for justice, and a better Malaysia."

The 13th general election needs to be called by April next year when the Parliament's mandate ends.

Guests at the dinner, dubbed 'Keadilan Gala Night 2012', were treated with a seven-course Chinese cuisine, included steamed red snappers, deep fried chickens, prawns and crab roe.

The dinner was accompanied by about one-and-half hours of live band performance throughout the night, followed by a comedy theatre presented by the PKR Activist Theatre Group.

The play takes place in the near future after BN's defeat in the next general election, and an unnamed Umno president dressed like Adolf Hitler plots his return to power with his advisors, who were all wearing military uniforms.

Much to the Fuhrer's chagrin, nothing seemed to work and the 30-minute play ends with the advisors singing 'Maafkan Kami' (forgive us) to the audience.

Stand-up comedy

Also present to liven up the night, theatre activist Jo Kukathas performed a stand-up comedy as a very confused 'Miss Ribenaberry'.

"They (the government) tell us Bersih is bad. We cannot have Bersih because it is very bad. Why is Bersih bad? Maybe they are used to everything being very dirty," said Ribenaberry at a frantic pace while dressed in purple with a matching wig.

"But then when you go to Dataran Merdeka, why do they want to 'bersih' (clean) us with water cannons? Does Malaysia got water shortage?"

"They say everything in Malaysia now must be 'cepat dan betul' (quick and correct). At Dataran Merdeka, they want to 'kejar dan pukul' (chase and beat). So I don't know what to believe anymore," she said among her many jokes in her 30-minute routine poking fun at various issues and personalities.

In his speech to conclude the night's event, Anwar defended PKR deputy president Azmin Ali, whose purported images of him having an extramarital affair had been published on the Internet. The party supremo dismissed it as another old Umno tactic.

"Is this something new? No. It's been a pattern; a system promoted and defended and clearly entrenched in the Umno psyche," he said.

Azmin, who previously denied the allegation, has initiated legal proceedings against *Utusan Malaysia* for publishing stills from the alleged sex video on May 2.

Responding Information Minister Rais Yatim's statement that he is a DAP tool who no longer cares about Malays nor Islam, Anwar said, "Given a choice to choose competent, credible Chinese leaders, my choice is (DAP leader) Lim Kit Siang. Umno's choice is Chua Soi Lek," he quipped, drawing laughter from the audience.

"I made my choice and I stick to it. I make no apologies. I will fight and defend our position!" Anwar shouted.

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