

300 ex-BN members to join PKR

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By Susan Loone

About 300 former members of Gerakan, the Indian Progressive Front and MIC have applied to join PKR.

De facto leader Anwar Ibrahim accepted their forms at a ceramah last night in Nibong Tebal, from Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia chief Badrul Hisham Shaharin, better known as Chegu Bard.

"This should come as a big shock to (Penang) Umno chief Zainal Abidin Osman," said Badrul.

In front of a 5,000 strong multi-racial crowd Anwar thanked the applicants for joining the "PKR family".

He later apologised for having selected Tan Tee Beng to represent the Nibong Tebal parliamentary constituency in the 2008 general election.

"This time around, do not threaten or ask me to give in during the selection of candidates," he said in his hour-long speech.

"We will only choose those who are qualified, good, and are firm in defending the principles of a clean and fair government for the people."

Tan, a former Gerakan leader who had joined PKR, had quit the party in 2009 and became an Independent candidate before joining Parti Kita as its Penang chief. He has since been sacked for challenging party chief Zaid Ibrahim.

'Principles, integrity to be upheld'

Anwar expressed regret over the departure of several PKR leaders due to personal interest.

Among them were former Penang PKR chief and Bayan Baru MP Zaharin Mohd Hisham, who was "merely seeking projects to enrich himself".

Zahrin had quit the party about the same time as Tan, citing irreconcilable differences with Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, whose administration he had openly criticised.

"I am with Guan Eng on this, based on principles and integrity. Whoever is not in line with this, we will reject," Anwar (left) said.

He repeated Pakatan Rakyat's pledges on free education, reduction in the price of petrol and the abolition of toll charges for motorcycles in Penang.

The night ended with a display of fireworks.

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