

## **Anwar 'invites' Najib to his parliament rebuttal**

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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has "invited" Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to be present in Parliament on Monday to listen to his address on the latest budget.

"Because I have heard Najib's (budget) speech, and I have requested him to listen to my speech on Monday 11.30 am commenting on the budget.

"As the finance minister, I hope he will accept my invitation. If he doesn't want to debate it, doesn't matter," said Anwar (left) at the Pakatan Rakyat dinner at the Stadium Melawati Shah Alam last night.

"Let's wait and see if he dares to come or not," he said.

Anwar added that he is prepared to allow Najib, who is Pekan MP, to comment and intervene in his parliamentary speech.

The prime minister may not attend all parliamentary sessions. Anwar, who is Permatang Pauh MP, however said he, as former finance minister, has never missed attending an opposition leader's rebuttal speech.

"When I was finance minister, I had never absented myself from a rebuttal speech by the opposition leader. I feel that by listening to his/her speech, we are showing for the democratic system," he said.

"I advise Najib to be present on Monday, and I will give him room to comment and rebut fully during that time," he added.

Turning back to world

Commenting on the PM's budget speech yesterday, Anwar said this was the first time that a budget presentation has failed to touch on the international economic scenario, that is an essentially tied to the country's economy.

"Najib's budget is the first time it has been presented without giving the international economic scenario. This is relevant because Malaysia is a trading nation and it cannot run away from external issues.

"(Yesterday's) budget did not make any reference. We will address this on Monday," he said.

Instead, he said, the budget speech was spent attacking Pakatan from the outset.

"From start to finish, the budget speech attacked Pakatan Rakyat and myself. I was thinking to myself, when would we swap places?" he said, to thunderous applause from the participants of the fundraising event that drew about 2,500.

Najib's Budget 2013 speech has been roundly criticised not just for delivering what is said to be a vote-canvassing exercise lacking in real structural solutions for the country's economy, but for being more of a campaign speech.

The PM's presentation was peppered with attacks on the opposition coalition, firing salvo after salvo in his closing remarks and making repeated pleas for the BN to be returned in the polls so it may deliver "six more budgets".

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