

Pakatan exploits Najib's gaffe to the hilt
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What was expected to be an entertainment coup for Penang BN when they secured Korean K-Pop sensation Psy for their Chinese New Year bash has turned out to be a public relations fiasco.

"Are you ready ...?" - the beginnings of a line unwittingly gifted to Pakatan Rakyat by Prime Minister Najib Razak's misreading of the reaction of the Penang crowd at the BN's CNY gathering has become a juicy attack weapon for opposition campaigners.

Najib was rebuffed with a "No" all three times he posed the question "Are you ready for BN?" to the crowd of Penangites at Monday's BN's do at Han Chiang High School.

The PM must have been expecting an easy switch as he segued from his first question to the crowd "Are you ready for Psy?" - to which the crowd's response was "Yes" - to "Are you ready for BN?" - at which the same crowd responded with a "No".

Najib, a scripted politician more than an intuitive one, persisted with the second question, despite drawing repeat rebuffs that were captured on video.

Perhaps, had he accepted opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's challenge to debate him, he would have acquired the flexible, smooth-on-the-uptake responses of a cool politico.

Rhetorical nimbleness under hostile audience pressure is a mark of the seasoned debater.

But at the Han Chiang High School, Najib plodded on to a fiasco, judging from the way his stumble became juicy fodder by the end of day, thanks to its capture on YouTube.

Najib's gaffe and the gumption of the Penang crowd's "No" was marveled at in far off places like Miri, understandably accustomed to acquiescence rather than defiance by more than three decades of BN Chief Minister Taib Mahmud's rule.

Emulate Penangites, urges Anwar

This allowed Pakatan supremo Anwar Ibrahim, who was on a PKR campaign swing in that part of Sarawak, to entice his Miri waterfront audience to the need for emulation of the Penangites.

"I told them the people of Penang wanted to see Psy (the Korean entertainer BN hired for their CNY bash), but they don't want BN to rule them," said Pakatan's campaigner-in-chief as he stumped before an overflow crowd at Batu Maung, Penang, last night at a CNY celebration hosted by the PKR state assembly representative for the ward, Abdul Malik Abul

Kassim.

"I told them the people of Penang have this," said Anwar, pointing his index finger at his temple.

Earlier in the day, also in Penang, at the DAP CNY Open House, speakers led by state DAP chairperson Chou Kon Yeow, had tried out laughter-inducing variations on the theme provided by Najib's gaffe, of which the juiciest was "Are you ready for Pakatan in Putrajaya?"

BN brought a world-class entertainer to Penang whereupon the PM proceeded to gift Pakatan with something that would enable the latter to take the Mickey out of the ruling coalition for some time yet.

One cannot say the error is uncharacteristic of a handout-dispensing administration.

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