

Najib a weak leader with bad advisers, says Anwar

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By Susan Loone

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim drove home a single message at his ceramah in Penang last night - that premier Najib Abdul Razak is a "weak leader surrounded by bad advisers".

Backing his claim, he noted that Najib has failed to speak up on many issues that have affected the interests and rights of Malaysians.

This included the threat by Malay rights group Perkasa to burn the Malay-language Bible which contains the word 'Allah', much to the alarm of Christians.

Anwar scolded Umno for keeping mum, also asking: "... Did Najib ever tell them not to do it? Was there even one word from Najib to say this is wrong? What's wrong with you?"

"Are you a PM who can only bring Psy (to perform in Penang)? A PM must lead, and must make difficult decisions.

"If I am given the mandate to lead, I do not care if you are Malay, Chinese, Indian, or Dayak. If you are extreme, I will say 'No, this country is our country and all Malaysians have a right to this land'."

He was addressing some 2,000 people at a Chinese New Year cum fundraising dinner in Balik Pulau, organised by Abdul Halim Hussein, who is also Penang speaker.

The event featured the Yassin Brothers who belted two songs - Reformasi and Perjuangan.

Deputy Chief Minister I and state PKR chief Mansor Othman, state DAP chief Chow Kon Yeow and Balik Pulau MP Yusmadi Yusoff were also present.

Anwar's day-long visit to Penang had included attendance at a tea party in Nibong Tebal, maghrib prayers at the Pantai Jerejak mosque, Chinese New Year celebrations in Batu Maung and Balik Pulau, and a ceramah in Bayan Baru that drew some 1,000 people in spite of the rain.

Anwar also said that Najib was "weak and afraid" for failing to castigate former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who had suggested that Bersih co-leader Ambiga Sreenevasan's citizenship's be revoked by amending the federal constitution.

"Mahathir was also asked about the royal commission of inquiry on illegal immigrants in Sabah who were issued MyKad, but he blamed the (first) prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman for giving citizenship to Chinese and Indians," said Anwar.

"Did Najib ever say anything to that? Do you think you have a PM who has the courage to defend other races and tell Mahathir that he is wrong? Did he ever say anything?"

"Did he ever tell Mahathir that Chinese and Indians are citizens, their children our children? He never said a word - he is afraid."

Salute to Penangites

Anwar also referred to the Penang BN Chinese New Year open house on Monday where Korean pop idol Psy had performed his top hit 'Oppa Gangnam Style'.

He poked fun at Najib who had continued to ask the crowd if they are ready for BN when they had shouted a resounding "No".

"For politicians, if you are with the people, you can read the situation. If you ask whether people support BN and they say No, you (must) quickly change the subject," Anwar joked, drawing laughter and cheers.

"I suppose the (Penang) BN (leaders) told him that the coalition has regain support in Penang, and that most people hate Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng. So, when he heard the crowd say 'No', he thought he heard a 'Yes' ... it is quite pitiful."

Anwar said he was in Miri when told about this, and that people there had told him how "great and brave" Penangites were to give Najib a piece of their mind.

"If it was MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek who had asked the question, I can understand the response but this is the PM!," he added.

"I told them, I am a Penangite. It is not so much that they are brave, but Penangites are smart people, I salute them!"

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