

Puad says he is not racist, supports Chinese schools

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DAY 6 What's happening during the election campaigns around the country today? Quotable quotes, planned events and unplanned incidents as they take place.

11.20pm - Segamat: PKR's Segamat candidate Chua Jui Meng campaigns in Felda Palong Timor, an area which is regarded as a BN stronghold.

Speaking from a stage under the drizzle, Chua directed his speech to a nearby coffeeshop.

Chua spoke about why he left BN and what Pakatan has in store for Felda.

"Why did I leave BN? Because the government has been in power for too long that it thinks it can do anything and spend the people's money as it likes.

"That is why I joined PKR to make a change with (opposition leader) Anwar Ibrahim," he said.

The BN supporters appear indifferent as Chua criticised Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

11.00pm - Bukit Bintang: Surprisingly, MCA's candidate for Bukit Bintang Frankie Gan decided to give his vocal chords and backup dancers a rest tonight.

Gan was scheduled to perform during a function in Brickfields tonight, but could have gave his campaign gimmick a rest for a night as not to upstage BN deputy chair Muhyiddin Yassin, who was the main speaker tonight.

Muhyiddin told about 400 people at the Hang Tuah flats that Pakatan's plans to lower vehicle and fuel prices was hubris because there is no such thing as a free lunch.

9.00pm - Saratok: PKR's Saratok candidate Ali Biju made a break through today by organising ceramah at a longhouse in Engkajang Roban, where he was once banned from.

Two longhouse chiefs have openly spoke during the ceramah to ask the longhouse folks to support Ali Biju.

The ceramah was attended by over 300 people from ten longhouses within a 15km radius, despite the heavy downpour which started since 6pm.

A longhouse resident Sulie Jamtal told Malaysiakini since the incumbent Jelaing Merest has been dropped, residents in the area are more inclined to vote for Ali Biju who is also Krian state assemblyperson, and allowed him to speak ceramah here.

Ali Biju's posters were seen on the walls and foods were prepared to treat his campaign team and guests.

However, the chief for the longhouse where ceramah held was nowhere to be seen.

9.10pm - Segamat: Pakatan Rakyat is holding a mini ceramah in Jementah, which attracted about 300 people. Jementah is a town some 25km away from the heart of Segamat.

PKR's Segamat candidate Chua Jui Meng mocks Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's visit to the town today.

"Last night when (opposition leader) Anwar Ibrahim came 30,000 people came out to see him.

"Today when Muhyiddin came, was there even 1,000 people?" he asked.

8.30pm - Batu Pahat: Caretaker deputy education minister Puad Zakarshi attends a meet-and-gather session at a rural Chinese primary school.

Some 50 parents and villagers fill up one third of the seats arranged and their response to Puad's speech is lukewarm.

Speaking to media after delivering a short speech, Puad denies Rafizi Ramli's allegation that he is racist.

"That's not true. I fully support 1Malaysia, support multiracial and inclusiveness practised by our prime minister.

"You can see I always support Chinese independent school. I fight for them, I got RM2 million for them. I worked very hard to get allocation for Chinese schools in the last five years."

He then uses DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang to justify his remarks that

defend Malay rights.

"It is not true that I'm a chauvinist. It is normal as a Malay leader, I talk about Malay interest, but it doesn't mean I'm anti-non-Malay.

"Just like Lim Kit Siang. In Parliament, he always talks about Chinese schools. I don't think it is fair for Rafizi to accuse me as anti-non-Malays," he adds.

Before leaving the school, Puad is asked by photographers to pose with his car, a Toyota Harrier which is decorated with blue lights and party flags.

6.30pm - Batu Pahat: Some 500 Batu Pahat folks, mostly Chinese, welcome PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli like a rock star when he arrives at a ceramah in a Chinese hawker centre.

From the abolition of toll and PTPTN, to the reduction of fuel prices, Rafizi tries to convince the crowd that the rakyat will have a better life under Pakatan Rakyat's rule.

"If you buy a Myvi that costs RM46,000, you have to pay RM600 of monthly instalment for nine years, RM300 out of the RM600 is paid as tax to the government, for (the wife of prime minister) Rosmah (Mansor) to buy rings," he jokes, adding that a Honda Accord would cost only RM65,000 if Pakatan comes to power and abolishes car excise duties.

"We all can sell our Waja and drives a Honda Accord. So if you plan to buy cars, wait for another week," he says with a big smile.

The PKR candidate for Pandan parliamentary seat said he can travel nationwide to campaign for other candidates as BN did not field popular former MCA president Ong Tee Keat in Pandan.

"People who are clean like Ong and (former Umno Wanita deputy chief) Kamilia (Ibrahim) have been rejected from Umno and BN while the most racist person Ibrahim Ali was fielded as candidate."

He is here to campaign for PKR candidate for Batu Pahat parliamentary constituency Mohd Idris Jusi who is contesting against caretaker deputy education minister Puad Zakarshi.

"Do you know Puad is a frog? Last time he was with PAS and whacked Umno every day. Now he is an Umno man, he has forgotten all this criticism against Umno in

the past.

"He is one of the Umno leaders who criticise non-Malays.

"We don't want a representative from Batu Pahat who is racist like Puad!" he says to a loud cheer from the floor.

The young leader is popular among the Chinese folks who surround him immediately after he finishes speaking to have photographs with him.

"Ubah! Kali ini mesti ubah! (Change! This time must change!)," an elder Chinese man shouts while shaking Rafizi's hand.

6.00pm - Batu Pahat: Mohd Idris Jusi, who is the PKR candidate for Batu Pahat, told a Chinese-majority crowd of about 500 at a hawker centre that Malay voters in rural villages were screened the sex video which allegedly showed Anwar Ibrahim having sex with a Chinese woman.

"Umno gathered 40 or 50 people in a hall to watch the video... This is gutter politics," Idris (centre in photo) claims.

"If the video is true, why don't they call up the religious department that time and arrest him?"

His speech is met with rounds of applause from the enthusiastic Chinese audience who listen to him attentively.

Speaking on the slander spread by Umno among the Malays, Idris reveals that several Malay villagers in the rural areas had "fled" to estates when PKR campaigners approached them.

"They said they don't want to befriend us because (caretaker Penang Chief Minister) Lim Guan Eng does not allow azan (calls) in Penang."

3.30pm - Bentong: Despite the heavy downpour in Bentong, it does not deter some 700 people from listening to Pakatan Rakyat supremo Anwar Ibrahim's ceramah at the Kampung Baru hawker centre.

Referring to Pakatan's pledge to shut down the Lynas rare earths refinery, Anwar encourages the crowd to continue their struggle no matter "rain or shine" and that he will not allow "the hazardous plant" to continue its operations.

In a press conference later, Pakatan's Bentong parliamentary seat candidate Wong Tack stresses that he stands firmly with Anwar on the matter that the controversial Lynas refinery must be shut down.

"I stand next to Anwar, he clearly mentions that we have the facts to prove that Lynas is a hazardous plant, (and that) it will be closed should we come into power."

3.30pm - Sungai Siput: Chief secretary to the government Dr Ali Hamsa attends a people-gathering event hosted by the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry at the Social Welfare office in the town of Sungai Siput.

During the event, he gives away RM300 meant as financial assistance to each of the 30 selected Sungai Siput citizens there on behalf of the ministry.

2.30pm - Tawau: DAP candidate for Sri Tanjong Chan Foong Hin lodges a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) over vehicles with BN flags allegedly distributing "goodies" such as rice, instant noodles and RM50 ang pows in the Sin Onn area of Tawau.

Meanwhile, relatives in Kunak got in a fight with one physically "attacking" the other when the latter was preparing campaign materials in his village on Tuesday.

The Borneo Post reports that police said the suspect had allegedly kicked a 38-year-old's hip but did not cause injuries.

A police report has been lodged, while a total 11 reports on offences related to the polls, including making threats and burning party flags, have been lodged in Sabah.

1.40pm: Seremban - Sinar Harian's Malacca and Negri Sembilan editions report PAS Jempol candidate - singer Aishah - as being scolded by residents of a Felda settlement when campaigning there.

According to the report, this does not deter her from continuing her campaign against BN's Isa Samad.

1pm - Penang: All over the state, daily conversations include questions such as "Where is the next free 1Malaysia dinner?"

The daily dinners, lucky draws and performances are being organised by the so-called 1Malaysia-Penang Welfare Club that openly supports BN chief Najib Abdul Razak.

A group of women having coffee in a cafe in the Pulau Tikus market today are overheard

laughing, "We're so lucky and blessed, that's why we have free food and drinks everyday."

Another chips in, "How many have you gone for? I have gone for seven! I just go to the ones near my home.

"I won't take a bus to attend further ones. By the time I climb up and down the bus, the free food in my belly would have been used up."

This was prior to DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng's walkabout in the market with candidates Zairil Khir Johari (Bukit Bendera) and Yap Soo Huey (Pulau Tikus).

At the launch of Yap's service centre later, Lim says, "What we want is not free food or drinks, but a Malaysia free from corruption."

1pm - Kota Kinabalu: At a coffeeshop in Tanjong Aru, a man is overheard telling his friends that they should vote for incumbent assemblyperson Edward Yong, even if they are unhappy with him.

"It's not that we love him, but we want to ensure (BN chief) Najib Abdul Razak continues as PM," he says to agreement among his friends.

Yong is facing PAS' Hamid Ismail, PBS' Salleh Tiasi and SAPP's Yong We Kong.

Hamid is counting on the support of his DAP colleagues. He has appeared at DAP ceramahs and has put up a billboard of him and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng (left) at the resort end of Kota Kinabalu.

PAS has an uphill task in Sabah, where some residents are telling Malaysiakini that PAS' ideology is too "extreme" for the Borneo state.

"Here even 'pak haji's play snooker and buy lottery tickets without anyone bothering them," one Sabahan says.

12.30pm - Sungai Siput: Chief secretary to the government Dr Ali Hamsa attends a luncheon with 300 public servants from Sungai Siput and Kuala Kangsar in Jalong today.

He says that the cabinet had approved a housing project for the public servants, which they can buy with a 30 percent decrease as compared to the market price.

He also praises caretaker Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak as having done a lot for the country under the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

"Najib showed up on television on March 19 to show the GTP and ETP report card. He explained the results, and that all our targets were reached, better than our expectations (in fact)," he adds.

He then urges all the public servants to keep up their hard work and to continue serving the people at their best.

12.10pm - Kulai: MCA candidate for Kulai, Tay Chin Hein, issues a statement today to deny that his campaign team has distributed leaflets which attack the motherhood of his rival Teo Nie Ching from DAP.

"I strongly condemn such acts because this is a battle of (ladies and) gentlemen. Kulai MCA and my team do not condone immoral campaign tactics," he says.

He is referring to the image of a leaflet uploaded on the Internet, showing a mother telling her baby that she will come back and feed the infant after "cheating the people of Kulai" while a group of angry Kulai citizens ask her, "If you go back to feed your baby milk, then who shall we approach when we have problems?"

Although the leaflet does not name anyone, it is obvious that it is targetted at Teo as she has a eight-month-old daughter.

In addition, the leaflet does not state its printer and publisher, which is against the election laws.

11.00am - Lubok Antu: The story of Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) president James Masing rescuing a newborn baby girl named Doris has made the front page in The Borneo Post today.

It is reported that he had sent a helicopter to buy baby formula after the mother found herself unable to breastfeed the infant.

Masing has also been spotted campaigning for BN Lubok Antu parliamentary seat candidate William Nyallau Badak at a nearby longhouse on Tuesday.

Upon hearing the plight of the family, the campaign group went to see them and to find out how they could help.

It took the helicopter a 15-minute ride to get there, whereas it would take almost two hours by boat.

PRS has gone all out to retain Lubok Antu, where the incumbent William Nyallau Badak faces a tough three-corner fight with Larry Sng of Sarawak Workers Party and Nicholas Bawin Anggat of PKR.

10.00am - Kota Kinabalu: DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang rebuts BN chief Najib Abdul Razak's claim that Pakatan Rakyat is serving Malaysians "poisoned honey".

"I don't think Malaysians have a death wish to take poisoned honey. People have eyes and

ears to see who is offering the poison," he says.

He adds that in fact, Najib is the one serving up poison by speaking of transformation but letting former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad (right) run the show.

"Last night in Gelang Patah, the (caretaker) deputy prime minister said they will bury me there. Mahathir first said that to set the pace and the DPM follows up to try to make sure I die in Gelang Patah," he says.

Meanwhile, he says a DAP event he was supposed to attend in Sandakan last night had to be cancelled because of a sudden power outage.

"It is disgraceful that a modern nation like Malaysia has total blackouts. Providence is on our side, so we can highlight this to the people of Sabah," he says.

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