

Mega Pakatan rallies shake Johor BN bastion

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JOHOR Yesterday's public holiday opened up for Pakatan Rakyat's top leaders a golden opportunity to hold several mammoth ceramah in Johor, attracting tens of thousands and taking its momentum to new heights in the southern BN fortress.

NONEThe ceramah at an outdoor car park of a shopping mall at Gelang Patah pulled in some 70,000 Chinese-majority crowd, breaking the attendance of 60,000 people recorded the previous night at the same venue.

Besides the unprecedented attendance, the total donation raised for the day reached a whopping RM263,328.80, comprising RM173,328.80 collected from the ceramah alone and RM90,000 from the series of events held throughout the day at the car park.

NONEIt was a clear sign of the overwhelming support of the Chinese electorate in southern Johor as many came from neighbouring constituencies such as Kulai, Johor Bahru, Pasir Gudang and Pulai, which Pakatan aims to wrest from the BN in this general election.

Another ceramah targeting the Malay crowd was held simultaneously at the outdoor car park of Tan Sri Dato Haji Hassan Yunus stadium in downtown Johor Bharu.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is allegedly involved in purported operations to fly in dubious voters from East Malaysia to the peninsula, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim said today.,

Pakatan has been struggling to garner the support of Malay voters in the BN stronghold state to meet its target of 38 percent, and this ceramah showed that still much work needs to be done in the last three days of the campaign.

Anti-establishment phenomenon

Two earlier ceramah in the town of Batu Pahat, located in central Johor, and Muar, in northern Johor, also recorded attendance of about 10,000 and 15,000 respectively with most present being Chinese.

Those were further indicators that the anti-establishment sentiment among Chinese is a statewide phenomenon.

NONE From the plate number of cars parked around the ceramah venues, it is believed that a significant number of participants were outstation voters who had returned home to vote on Sunday.

Yesterday was Labour Day, a national holiday, and this allowed outstation voters to enjoy a five-day break until Sunday by taking an additional two-day leave.

PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and PAS vice-president Salahuddin Ayub took turns to address the crowd in most of the ceramah, projecting an united multiracial front.

During the ceramah in Johor Bahru, it was clear that Anwar attempted to use his spectacular oratory skill to allay the fear of Malays harboured about the DAP, particularly Kit Siang.

Opposition's 1M'sia show

Describing the DAP supremo as "the people's fighter", Anwar stressed that there is no reason to fear Kit Siang simply because he is assertive in pursuing his political principles.

NONE "Some civil servants told me they are worried because Chinese now are more persistent in politics... Why are you afraid of him? Because he is smart? Because he is brave? Because he is assertive? Or because he works hard?

"(And because of that) you don't elect such a person but Malay leaders who are stupid?" he asked.

Anwar stressed that Pakatan needs all capable leaders to form a team to rule the nation regardless of race.

Anti-corruption and fair treatment to all ethnic communities based on provisions enshrined in the federal constitution were highlighted by all the top leaders in their speeches.

Another favourite topic among them was former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

NONE Speaking to the crowd in Gelang Patah, Anwar urged them to prove Mahathir wrong by voting for Kit Siang.

"Mahathir said let's bury him (Kit Siang) in Gelang Patah and bury Anwar in Permatang Pauh. But Mahathir, I'm not (caretaker prime minister) Najib (Abdul Razak) who has no courage to rebut you."

He continued to lambast his former boss at the ceramah at Johor Bahru attracting some 10,000 people, making it the largest Malay-majority ceramah in the state since nomination day on April 20.

"I ask Mahathir, you are 87 years old already. You want to bury Anwar and bury Kit Siang, what about your own grave?"

But he was quick to stress that he never says he wants Mahathir to die as reported by the BN-controlled media.

"I want him to live. I want him to watch TV3 on May 6 (to see the results of GE13)," he said and hoops of laughter rolled across the floor.

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