

## **1,000 brave drizzle to see 'Water Ubah' launched**

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**By Susan Loone**

DAP's mascot, Sarawak's burung kenyalang or hornbill, was successfully launched at the coast of Sungai Pinang this morning.

About 1,000 supporters waited with bated breath for around 15 minutes ignoring a drizzle, armed with umbrellas and cameras, to see the bird finally launched by Chief Minister and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

water ubah launch 130713It was a carnival-like atmosphere as the crowd waited in anticipation of the launching of the inflatable bird as they listened to speeches by Lim, Ubah hornbill creator Ooi Leng Hang, Sarawak DAP central executive committee member John Brian, the party's state chief Chow Kon Yeow and Gelang Patah MP Lim Kit Siang.

Ooi said the mascot, which was first introduced to the public in the last Sarawak elections, symbolised "hope, dedication and change".

He added that the hornbill was revered by the natives and can be found in forested highlands.

"The idea for the mascot was motivated by Sarawak DAP chief Wong Ho Leng, who brainstormed with me on how to merge the party's symbol with the culture of Sarawak's Dayak," he said.

"It was not an easy task at first but later we managed to create a mascot that symbolises freedom, equality and change, not only for Sarawakians alone but for all Malaysians," he added.

Hornbills chased out of the forest

During his speech, Brian said the hornbill is considered "the highest-ranked bird" by the indigenous Iban community.

"Every year during our Gawai celebration, we have a ritual to recognise the Kenyalang," said Brian, an Iban himself.

water ubah launch 130713"Now it seems that the hornbill has flown out of the forest and into other parts of the country, maybe because their environment has

been disturbed too much!" he jested.

"Sarawakians have been affected by the change in Penang since 2008, it is hoped that in the coming elections, we would be able to make a real change," he stressed.

However, Brian said that the party has to put in extra efforts to capture voters in rural Sarawak by disseminating proper information in the area, something that has been lacking so far.

Currently, the DAP holds five parliamentary and 12 state seats in Sarawak.

Accompanying Lim in the two-hour event were DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh, state party chief Chow Kon Yeow, MPs Tan Kok Wai (Cheras) and Fong Kui Lun (Bukit Bintang).

The DAP tried to emulate Hong Kong's 16.5m tall (6 stories high) giant inflatable yellow duck by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, but the height of its hornbill is only seven metres, or 25ft tall and 10ft wide.

DAP's critics have questioned the object's political representation, the cost of RM60,000, its purpose and sustainability, including its ability to attract tourists.

Bird hailed as agent of change

During his speech, Lim hailed the bird as an agent of change, expressing the hope that "its spirit will float in the waters of Penang, and travel over to Sabah and Sarawak".

In recognising the constant criticisms from opponents of the state's policy, Lim said the people should be engaged despite differences in opinion.

"To be a people-friendly government different from the BN, we have to engage the people, including those who criticise us, unless they are racists and extremists," he said.

"We always have to be ready to let go, to give people freedom, for example, to have local government elections so that the people, not the government, can decide the kind of rule they want," he added.

"We also have to share what we have with the society, as sharing will make our society better," he stressed.

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