

PM: 'Turun Anwar' rally had no substantive demands

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Leaders of the opposition-led “Turun Anwar” rally last Saturday did not raise any “substantive” demands that can contribute to ongoing reform efforts, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim told Indonesian media Narasi.tv on the sidelines of his official visit to Jakarta today.

Anwar, however, told journalist and Narasi founder Najwa Shihab that the rally of some 25,000 people was the first in Malaysia’s history to be carried out peacefully with assistance from authorities.

“I am sure you (Najwa) have seen how in all past demonstrations there were people who were hit, injured, or other incidents.

“But this rally went on peacefully. And for me, that is the effectiveness of our reforms,” said Anwar, who was asked his views on the current situation in Malaysia following the rally that called for his resignation.

“What are their demands? This is actually driven mostly by the Islamic party,” he continued, referring to PAS.

“That’s why the prayers call for curses upon non-Muslims, that Islam is under threat, that the Malays are surrendering to the Chinese... things I think are not substantive

“There are no economic proposals... no elements of structural national reform other than the cost of living, which we are trying to address,” Anwar claimed in a video of the interview, posted on Narasi's official Instagram account.

Anwar went on to highlight his recent announcements on lowering of fuel prices and RM100 cash handout to all adult Malaysians as partial measures taken to address the rising cost of living.

“I tried to inject a relatively high amount of funds, RM15 billion a year... All nine million (recipients) benefited.

“That’s the maximum we can do. Is it a (total) solution? No. Because the cost of living is still burdensome,” he admitted, adding Malaysia had also moved to raise the national minimum wage.

Anwar also took a swipe at various opposition politicians attending the rally, including former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, accusing his critics of “protecting corruptors” among them.

Anwar earlier attended a meeting with various Indonesian chief editors and senior media personalities, organised by Ikatan Solidariti Wartawan Malaysia Indonesia, currently led by Astro Awani editor-in-chief Ashwad Ismail.

The meeting was also organised in conjunction with Malaysia's 13th Annual Consultation with Indonesia, the first for Anwar and President Prabowo Subianto.

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