

The allegations fly... up to the final minute
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Character attacks thatched together in the last minute were launched in the final hours of campaigning last night in Ijok.

The by-election, seen largely as a proxy battle between two deputy prime ministers - one axed, one current - saw each side accusing the other of race politics and of lying to the voters.

MCA president Ong Ka Ting called PKR advisor and ex-deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim a double-faced politician who only draw crowds, but not votes.

"Whenever Anwar speaks, even the birds will stop flying and perch on his shoulder to listen. But what he says 20 years ago is complete opposite now," he said while campaigning at SRJK(C) Ijok.

Ong quoted a proverb, "He's playing to the crowd... See humans, he speaks the human language, see spirits, he speaks the spirits language."

Ong's deputy, Chan Kong Choy also described Anwar as untrustworthy: "When he was in power, did he take care of the interests of the Chinese?"

Smear pamphlets

Smear pamphlets were distributed. In them were images of female figure saying to the masses "to support DAP is to support PAS" quoting a statement by a PKR party official during last month's Machap by-election.

In the foreground were figures of DAP and PAS leaders shaking hands, but with their shadows showing knives behind their backs.

A news article from 1987 where Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang was quoted as telling Anwar not to "make the Chinese hate the government" was also distributed.

Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, who made a brief appearance, said the Chinese should support MCA to continue to get benefits from the government.

"The Chinese are practical minded. Nak untung? Undilah BN," he said to the audience of mostly women and children.

"PKR boleh cakap, tapi tak boleh bikin. BN cakap, boleh buat, boleh bikin ... Dia boleh janji macam macam, tak boleh bikin."

He also took advantage of an apparent slip of words by PKR candidate Khalid Ibrahim in Tuan Mee last Saturday.

"I see our wave of support is strong. Khalid, dia pun kata undilah BN (laughs). Khalid ... tak boleh dipakailah ... rumah besar di Damansara ... orang korporat ..."

"Undilah Parthiban, dia anak tempatan, dari estate, kesian dia ... dia belum kahwin ... dia banyak tak tau lah (laughs). Bila dia kahwin, dia akan nangis ... dia akan tahu lah ... nikmatnya," said Najib.

Najib reiterated that he defended Chinese interests when he was education minister: "I repealed the act to remove the Chinese schools. If you look in the region, in Singapore, in Thailand, in Indonesia, there are no Chinese schools. Only in Malaysia."

"What has Anwar done for the Chinese when he was in the government. What did he did do to protect the interests of the Chinese?"

'Conned' by the government

Meanwhile, about 100 metres away, DAP leaders were addressing a ceremah in support of PKR's Khalid Ibrahim at a road junction adjacent to seafood restaurants.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said the "people of Ijok" have been "conned" by the ruling government.

He said recent development pledges were meant "to enrich the few cronies" in the BN.

"The roads that they tar... by regulation, it should be 13 inches deep. But I can guarantee you that if I dig into that new road in front of you, it will only be nine inches deep. Where's the remaining four inches? Masuk kocek!"

"Kita mesti ajar Samy itu! Ajar MCA, yang pandai pura pura! MCA party members, oh ... they are the best at pretending. And how they kowtow to their Umno masters ... you should see the way Ong Ka Ting lowers himself to [prime minister] Abdullah [Ahmad Badawi]. He lowers himself, literally, and speaks in a different, lower voice!"

"But in Machap, Ka Ting acts the hero! He shouts! But we should teach him and MCA a lesson. Vote Khalid to register your protest against the government!" said Lim to an audience of at least 400.

Lim also lamented the overwhelming presence of the police force in Ijok: "The police, I don't know what they are doing! Instead of catching thieves, instead of doing their jobs, they are harassing the wrong people!"

"They should investigate the allegations of phantom voting! They should investigate vote buying! Look at them! I don't know what they are doing!"

DAP central executive committee member Teng Chang Kim said the BN representatives "make laws which they themselves don't follow."

"Look at the new menteri besar office they constructed ... they have not even obtained the CF (certificate of fitness)!"

'I will keep my promises'

Later, PAS ran a video of a string of corruption allegations levelled at the ruling government including the Turkish gullet, the purchase of the RM200 million prime minister's jet, the Sukhoi

and submarine purchases and the Altantuya murder scandal.

The final appearance was made by Khalid, who introduced his family to the crowds.

"I bring them here so that you know that I won't go against my promises," he said.

In his speech, Khalid pledged to set up a development model for Ijok, to hire a group of accountants to see the development spending pledged by the Selangor state government and to conduct a study on the economy of Ijok.

"I will check on Khir Toyo's government. My Chinese, Malay and Indian accountant friends will check on him and how he has used the money."

"Support me and I will check on him ... the government must have accountability and transparency," he added.

The final campaign night saw a carnival like atmosphere with Chinese drum performances, courtesy of a Klang vernacular school.

There was also a round-the-clock police helicopter patrol in the skies over Ijok.

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