

Anwar seeks to bridge Malaysia's East-West gulf
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim attempted to bridge the gulf in political consciousness between the Peninsula and Borneo in a speech before an overflow crowd in Sibu last night.

Speaking to over 2,000 diners at a three-storey restaurant in this city that will elect a new MP in a by-election on May 16, Anwar skillfully drew the mixed-race crowd of Chinese, Iban, Malays and Melanau into responsibility for his 'Save Malaysia' campaign that Pakatan Rakyat have enunciated as the theme for their nationwide roadshow.

The PKR supremo took the surest path towards inferring this joint responsibility by talking about timber and the appropriation of this resource by a corrupt few.

pkp gathering in hulu selangor 260310 anwar 02 "They talk about 1Malaysia," he roared to the audience at the PKR organised dinner, "when they want your votes but when they deal out licences for timber they give it to their wives, children and cronies.

"They talk about 1Malaysia at election time but when they think about handing out contracts, it is to the same select few," he said.

"Take the example of our leaders like Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Aziz (Nik Mat). He has been in charge for nearly 20 years now and yet you cannot say he has taken a single timber concession for himself or his family," Anwar hammered away.

After getting the crowd keyed up to his theme that resource-rich Malaysia was being appropriated by a corrupt few while the rest of the population was sliding downscale, Anwar spoke of land, an issue of grave concern to the Dayak.

"They had to get rid of a good menteri besar like Nizar (Jamaluddin) in Perak because he was giving land to small vegetable gardeners," continued Anwar.

"They said Nizar was not Malay because he was doing things like that. But it is alright by their standards to give a mountain (Genting Highlands) to Lim Goh Tong," he cracked, to knowing laughter from the crowd.

"Vegetable gardeners tending for over 40 years to small plots of TOL (temporary occupation licences) land cannot be given land but big towkays can be given mountains," said Anwar to a guffawing crowd.

Pakatan ropes in Snap

Anwar then told the crowd that a historic agreement had been reached between PKR, DAP and PAS, with Sarawak opposition party Snap included, in preparation for the Sibu by-election.

"There will be only one candidate for Pakatan and the person will be from DAP whom the rest of us will back to the hilt," he said.

"This will be the start of truly solid collaboration among all the opposition parties in Sarawak for the state election that is coming soon.

"Here in Sibuan begins the agreement that the whole country is united against the misrule of the Barisan Nasional and here will begin the coordinated effort to say, 'Enough is enough,' " railed Anwar to a crowd that was not only mixed-raced but appeared to be from all walks of life.

Finally, he rounded in on his concluding and, on the evidence of the reception it was receiving, his winning theme: that under a Pakatan government, "there would be no distinction between Malay, Chinese, Indian, Dayak or Kadazan", using the Mandarin term 'ren' in its human family inclusiveness to refer to the entire Malaysian mosaic.

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