

Anwar goes south to save Malaysia
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Anwar Ibrahim yesterday took Pakatan Rakyat's theme of 'Selamatkan Malaysia' ('Save Malaysia') deep into a seemingly impregnable Umno bastion where he delivered a rousing retort to the ruling party's 'Malays are under threat' cry.

Speaking at a PKR-organised dinner in Gelang Patah in Johor, where his party's candidate had come within 1,000 votes of upsetting her Umno rival at the last general election, Anwar argued:

"To those who say this country is for the Malays and that they are under threat in their own country, I say you are a greater Malaysian when you fight against the plunder of your country's wealth by a few.

NONE "You are a greater Malaysian when you are concerned about the rights and welfare of the poor among the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks and Kadazans in the whole country.

"You are a greater Malaysian when you decide not only to be good in Bahasa Melayu but also at English and then go on to learn Mandarin because that would help your country economically in a highly competitive world.

"You are a greater Malaysian when you are not only roused to indignation by the shooting death of an Aminulrashid Amzah but also over the deaths of Teoh Beng Hock and A Kugan while they were under investigation.

"You are a greater Malaysian when you say, 'enough is enough, this country is mine as much as it is yours' and you decide to use your vote for a new future for your country at the next general election."

With that flourish, Anwar went on to tell his audience of 1,500 largely Chinese diners that he was prepared to "bear any burden, meet any hardship, suffer any humiliation, support any friend, and oppose any foe" to assure that this "beautiful country of ours is saved from the depredations of Umno-Barisan Nasional."

Being a greater Malay too

He went on to regale his audience with the more absurd details of those "depredations" and said that if the country persisted on its present course, "Malaysia would be in competition with Myanmar" as laggards in Asean.

azlan Anwar suggested to the diners that they were in great company for having paid to come to hear him speak because recently he had been invited to speak before distinguished audiences in Oslo and at Cambridge where he was asked why he was never invited to address Malaysian universities.

"I told them the standard at Malaysian universities was higher than at Cambridge and that probably I was deemed not qualified enough," he cracked to laughter from the audience.

Dinner over, a tired-looking Anwar proceeded to Plentong, a few kilometers away, where he addressed a crowd of about 4,000.

To the largely Malay audience, he said that he felt more authentically Malay and Muslim when he fights for the rights of all Malaysians regardless of their race or religion.

"Am I not a greater Malay for doing so?" he asked the crowd who harrumphed in appreciation.

The event however was marred by a police blockade which lasted 20 minutes. The police eventually ordered the organisers to end the ceramah after 25 minutes.

There were also 20 youth linked to Umno who shouted "buntut, khianat" (backside, traitor).

PAS leader arrested

Meanwhile, PAS Youth information chief Suhaizan Kayat was arrested last night and charged with sedition for comments made during his opening speech at an event in Taman Dahlia, which Anwar attended before heading to Plentong.

In his speech, Suhaizan criticised the force for misusing their resources by deploying hundreds of officers to disrupt Anwar's speech, saying that they were acting "like Umno-BN barua (lackeys)".

He said that the Johor Bahru Utara assistant commissioner Roslan Hassan had arrested him soon after.

"I had no choice. If I did not go with him, then the police would disrupt the event... The hundreds of police officers should be used to fight crime, not set up roadblocks and disrupt events.

"There were five roadblocks set up around the venue," he said when contacted.

Suhaizan, who spent one night in the police station's lock-up, added that posters and buntings advertising the event were also torn up and vandalised.

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