

Law conference: Anwar hails Bar Council for invitation
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Now that the 15th Malaysian Law Conference has come to a close, Anwar Ibrahim and the Bar Council organising committee are making light the controversy caused by the opposition leader's presence at the conference.

anwar ibrahim at 2010 law conferenceAs Anwar (left) gave his closing address, he applauded the organising committee's bravado for inviting him to the event, a move that was said to have cost Attorney-General Abdul Gani Patail's presence.

"Really, I should say that words can't convey my profound appreciation for the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' that your organisation had to suffer by inviting me here.

"But then again, I see it as a mark of conviction and fortitude that you have stood your ground in the face of adversity," said Anwar to the applause of the 400 participants at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre this afternoon.

Anwar is the first parliamentary opposition leader to be invited to close the three-day conference.

A costly decision

NONEBar Council president K Ragunath (right) poked fun at the controversy, while at the same time hinting at the repercussions they had endured to get the PKR de facto leader to grace the event.

"When Anwar asked me for the (South African Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo's) speech, I told (PKR vice-president and lawyer R Sivarasa) that I'll give it to him for a reasonable fee. And then Anwar looked at Siva and told him to tell me how much he charges to give a speech.

"I then told Siva to tell Anwar ... how much we have lost in monies and advertising, just to get him to speak here," he quipped, to laughter from the hall.

Ragunath turned serious, saying that the decision to invite Anwar was a collective one by the Bar Council.

"It was an easy decision for us. It was the right thing for us to do," he said.

It was speculated that Anwar's official presence at the law conference was why Abdul Gani turned down the invitation to attend, although the attorney-general did not disclose his reasons.

Prime Minister Najib Razak also turned down the invitation, saying he would be overseas.

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