

Police stop ceramah in Rengit, seven arrested
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Scores of police personnel, including members of the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU), last night stopped a Pakatan Rakyat ceramah in Rengit, Batu Pahat, from being held.

The police arrested seven people in the course of dispersing the crowd assembled to hear the speeches.

pkrc weekly pc 120707 latheefa Organised by Batu Pahat PKR, the ceramah was scheduled to hear - among others - Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

According to PKR information chief Latheefa Koya (left), the party division had applied for a permit to hold the ceramah elsewhere, but chose to organise it at the local PAS division office in Rengit after the application was turned down, according to the police, "for security reasons".

As people started gathering to hear speeches by Pakatan leaders in the evening, however, police personnel also started arriving in scores of cars and trucks, including 10 FRU trucks.

After initially calling for the ceramah to be confined within the Markaz PAS hall, the police apparently changed their minds and proceeded to stop the ceramah completely.

In the course of the dispersal of the crowd from inside the hall, seven people were arrested - two of whom were not attending the ceramah but were traders who had set up their stalls in anticipation of the large crowd - and brought to the Rengit police station.

Banners and posters were taken down and torn, while the audio system was taken away by the police personnel, said Latheefa.

The owners of Markaz PAS and the audio system are reported to have lodged reports against the seizure of equipment and the police' trespass on private property.

Among those arrested, four have reported being assaulted by the police.

"There was serious abuse of power," Latheefa told Malaysiakini when contacted.

PAS organ Harakah reported that among those present at the event were PKR deputy president Syed Husin Ali and Johor PKR chief Chua Jui Meng.

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