

Banner war on the road to Parliament
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A battle has broken out in Parliament this morning as several Pakatan Rakyat parliamentarians marched out of the building to erect banners from their respective political parties in retaliation to those put up by Umno.

The opposition MPs saw red early this week upon encountering banners for Umno's 61st annual general meeting being draped on lamp posts on both sides of the road leading to Parliament.

Teresa Kok (DAP-Seputeh) led the group of 20 MPs to put up opposition parties' banners on the railings as well as a lamp post just outside the precincts of the Parliament complex.

Kok had earlier raised the issue of the Umno banners in Parliament before the party kicked off its AGM on Tuesday, but her query was shot down by the House speaker.

According to her, the banners were subsequently removed later that day but they reappeared yesterday.

Kok had demanded to know on Monday night during the parliamentary session as to why Umno was allowed to hang its party banners along Jalan Parliamen.

Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia replied that banners were not under his jurisdiction and Kok was ticked off for seeking to politicise the issue.

"If you want, you can take it up with DBKL (Kuala Lumpur City Hall)," Pandikar told her.

In a tit-for-tat move, the opposition MPs today hung their banners under the watchful eyes of Parliament's security force.

At one point, Bandar Kuching DAP MP Chong Chieng Jen hoisted a poster of Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim on a lamp post just outside the entrance of the Parliament complex.

Meanwhile, Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) and Mohd Hatta Ramli (PAS-Kuala Krai) tied a huge Galas by-election banner on a railing.

If Umno can do it, so can Pakatan

Later, at a press conference in the Parliament's lobby, Kok said their move was an act of protest against the presence of Umno banners.

"The Parliament building should be free from all party politics. We disagree with the way Umno is using the entrance of this building to advertise its activities," she said.

"If Umno can hang their banner, so can Pakatan. We demand to know the speaker's stand and the decision made by the Parliament administrators on this matter," she said.

Mohd Hatta argued that if the banners were related to government or Parliament activities, they would not be an issue.



"But this is a political party's activity and we want to see how far they can accept the opposition's materials. We want the Parliament's compound to be free from such banners," he said.

While the action may seem "childish" to some, it is crucial to make it clear to Umno that it is just a component of the ruling BN, said PKR Kuala Langat MP Abdullah Sani.

Asked whether they had approached the City Hall for its permission to hang banners, the MPs said this was not a matter of seeking approval from the authorities.

"We would not ask City Hall for permission to hang our banners here because we respect the sanctity of this House," added Johari Abdul (PKR-Sungai Petani).

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