

**Najib's overheated rhetoric targeted**  
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Prime Minister Najib Razak's overheated rhetoric of wanting Umno members to defend Putrajaya with their lives if need be came in for wry comment by two Pakatan Rakyat politicians whose sense of irony was the more telling for being understated.

Pakatan supremo Anwar Ibrahim broached the matter from an angle that was less oblique than that of Khalid Samad, the PAS MP for Shah Alam, at a PKR fund-raising dinner in Penang yesterday.



But directly or tangentially, their approaches had the same effect of confirming what observers now know: Umno leaders' swelling abomination of Pakatan projects the latter as odds-on favourite to win the 13th general election.

Or else why the overblown rhetoric of one such as the PM, who said Umno members must defend Putrajaya with their crushed bodies, even with their lives?

"They speak like Putrajaya is theirs to keep forever?" cracked Anwar to 500 diners who paid hear him and Khalid Samad.

"Putrajaya is the rakyat's, not the personal property of Umno or anyone else," he said tartly.

Anwar went on to comment on the "disconnect" between the rhetoric of Najib's '1Malaysia' concept and the reality of two nations – one, the PKR leader claimed, that belonged to plutocrats tied to the ruling elite, and the other Malaysia marginalised by the depredations of the former.

"You see this clearly in the latest budget that the PM presented last week," claimed Anwar.

"One need not get to the subject of the 100-storey Warisan Merdeka to begin to fathom the extent of this disconnect," he asserted.

"Just look at the allocation for the refurbishment of the PM's residence in Putrajaya. That house was only recently built and now it is allocated a multi-million ringgit sum for refurbishments, and to whom - a dormant company," said Anwar in a tone lacking emphasis, as if to imply such enormities are rendered more repugnant by being understated.

BN on war footing

Anwar spoke earlier than Khalid because he had to rush off to a DAP function in Bagan where Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng was presiding.

Thus it was left to the evening's special guest, Khalid Samad, to hold the fort which he did but not before wryly observing that the diners would have to be satisfied with him as desert



after the main dish (Anwar) had been consumed.

The PAS MP, one of the leading lights of his party's play for the allegiance of non-Muslim Malaysians, continued in Anwar's understated vein by simulating astonishment at how things had changed over a period of just 24 months.

He observed that two years ago, the 'September 16' project of Pakatan's takeover of Putrajaya was derided by critics as 'Anwar's grand illusion'.

"Now the PM is talking about defending Putrajaya at all costs," he remarked.

Khalid didn't have to borrow former British PM Harold Wilson's famous bon mot of "a week is a long time in politics", but he was close to expressing astonishment that so much could have changed in so short a time.

"Pakatan has gone from being a bunch of laughable pretenders to claimants of Putrajaya serious enough for Umno leaders to resort to a war footing," said a bemused Khalid.

"All this has been made possible by Anwar Ibrahim," said Khalid, a subscriber, no doubt, of Thomas Carlyle's theory of history as the arena of heroic individuals.

Khalid observed that Pakatan needed to be congratulated for transiting so quickly from hopeless also-rans to Putrajaya presumptives.

In the interstices of Khalid's bemusement could be discerned a retooling of Lord Acton's famous aphorism: When absolute power collapses, it does so spectacularly.

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