

**Crowd unfazed by heavy downpour**  
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If candidates are elected based on the turnout or applause they draw at MCPX ceramah, DAP's Lim Kit Siang could well be prime minister by the end of the week.

After all, Barisan Nasional head Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (right) could only pull in 2,000 during his visit to Lembah Pantai in Kuala Lumpur last night and that, too, with help from popular artistes Mawi, Ziana Zain and nasyid group Raihan.

But this is not how the drama of elections plays out.

Despite huge turnouts to date for Hannah Yeoh, DAP's latest cili padi and Subang Jaya candidate against MCA's Ong Chong Swen, there is no guarantee that she will win her maiden outing in the state seat.

Last night, the 29-year-old lawyer took on her third ceramah, held at a field in USJ12, to a crowd estimated at about 6,000 at its peak.

Malaysians, famous for their lack of punctuality, turned out in numbers way before the talk was slated to begin at 9pm.

By 8.30pm, some 4,000 were already seated on plastic chairs and Ikea stools in front of the stage, while more streamed in until close to 10pm.

Homebound motorists caught in the daily Subang Jaya traffic jam gamely honked in support, prompted by whistle-blowing opposition supporters, who also waved flags and led the crowd in responding to the speakers.

DAP's Cheras candidate Tan Kok Wai hit the stage first, highlighting the plight of Chinese schools and their dwindling numbers under the BN government.

Speaking in a mixture of English and Mandarin, Tan was politely cheered on. His seriousness kept the crowd sombre.

**Crowd in stitches**

Next up was the more lively Puchong candidate Gobind Singh Deo, son of DAP chairperson Karpal Singh. His first words were greeted with sympathetic laughter, as they were delivered in a hoarse voice.

But he soon warmed up and kept listeners in stitches as he touched on issues involving MIC and its hapless president S Samy Vellu, and mimicked testimony at the royal commission of inquiry into the Lingam tape.

Referring to Abdullah, he said: "It looks like the PM, it sounds like the PM, but is he the PM?"

Midway through his spiel, it began to drizzle but the majority of the crowd stuck it out under

their umbrellas. Gobind, in his booming voice, continued to poked fun at BN's claim that it 'speaks for everyone'.

He reminded the crowd that this was hypocritical based on the way that MIC's Cameron Highlands incumbent K Devamany had been cowed by BN whip Najib Abdul Razak for speaking up on the plight of Indians in Parliament, after the Hindraf rally on Nov 25 last year.

By the time, the lawyer finished, it was pouring cats and dogs. A party member asked those present if the ceramah should stop, but they had turned up to listen to Lim and were not going away.

### **Check on 'over-development'**

Yeoh, 29, tuned the listeners back to the seriousness at hand.

"People ask why there aren't more posters of me in Subang. Well, because this isn't a carnival," she said.

"This is serious and we don't want to waste more money by putting up too many unnecessary banners and stuff."

Basing her campaign on local matters, she promised to look into security, parking woes and the "over-development of Subang Jaya" if elected.

Lim arrived at 11.30pm, by which time the rain had subsided. Apologising for being late as this was his 11th stop for the day, the 67-year-old swung right into action.

Despite obvious signs of tiredness, Lim mesmerised the crowd with anecdotes regarding BN's manifesto, the prime minister's report card, Universiti Malaya's decline in ratings, the rising crime rate and calls by BN politicians for him to retire.

It was well after midnight when he was done.

The predominantly Chinese turnout at DAP ceramah may not be a true reflection of where the votes are heading this year.

Nevertheless, when thousands brave heavy rain and three hours of speeches on a work-night, it can't be all that bad for candidates.