

Kampung Baru hails 'Ketuanan Rakyat'
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Azreen Madzlan

Kelab Sultan Sulaiman in Kampung Baru once saw Malay nationalists gathered to fight for independence from the British in 1946. MCPX

More than 60 years later, another mass gathering took place at the 99-year-old club last night when some 20,000 people of all walks of life defied police ban to welcome Anwar's return to active politics following the expiry of his ban.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408 23 And this time around the rallying cry made to 'awaken' the gathered crowd was not 'Malay supremacy' as in 1946 but instead one which called for 'people's supremacy'.

"All of you will witness this tonight. We will not talk about Malay supremacy but the supremacy for all Malaysians," said PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim to the cheering crowd.

In his fiery one-hour speech, the charismatic Anwar assured the crowd - the majority of whom were Malays - that while he and his Pakatan Rakyat would champion for the rights of all Malaysians, they would nevertheless continue to protect the constitutional rights of the Malays.

At a press conference later, Anwar said that it was time for new politics to take over this country from the single dominant ideology of Umno, which only fought for the Malay rights.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408 16 "We are here to counter the massive propaganda campaign by Umno leaders, who are talking on Malay supremacy.

"And giving clear definitive answer in reply of this, to say that what we want, what we desire for is a new Malaysia is supremacy for all Malaysians." he said.

Also in the crowd was PKR president and Anwar's wife Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, daughter Nurul Izzah, Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim, PKR vice president Azmin Ali and Batu MP Tian Chua.

'I owe it to you'

At the rally, Anwar also attacked his nemesis, former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and accused him of abuse of power.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408 12 Once seen as the heir apparent to long-time leader Mahathir, Anwar was subsequently convicted on sex and corruption charges and spent six years in jail, before storming back to prominence in March elections.

"He claimed that under his time, the media is free to report anything. He also claims that under his time, the judges are fair and clean.

"Listen Mahathir, the 'correct-correct-correct' lawyer was under your administration!" he

said, followed by a huge laugh from the crowd which filled to the brim of the club's main gates.

Anwar also managed to elicit a pin-drop silence from the crowd when he emotionally reminisce his six years in jail and the five-year political ban that followed. The ban expires today.

"When people asked, what do you feel most satisfied after your release from prison? The judge's verdict? No. But it's when the people make the decision to release me.

"I owe it to the people. Because of me, some of you were beaten by the police, were thrown in jail, lost your jobs (during the reformasi). I owe it to you." he said to the loud applause from the crowd.

Azizah as prime minister?

Back at the press conference later, Anwar said it was not his priority to contest in Parliament for now.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408 09He added the priority was to ensure that all the states under Pakatan government were well administered.

"We will see whether there's a possibility of moving in now (to form the federal government), and promoting a candidate, maybe (Opposition Leader) Azizah (as the new prime minister) if we can reach a consensus among the Pakatan Rakyat leaders.

"Alternatively we wait until I'm able to contest in a by-election," he said.

Anwar also touched on the issue of party-hopping, saying that the Pakatan Rakyat has received enough support from BN elected representatives from all over the country. However, he assured that no money was involved in enticing the party-hopping BN MPs.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408 22And to this, he promised that if Pakatan formed the next federal government, Sabah will get up to 20 percent of royalties from petroleum and timber for the development of the state.

Anwar reiterated that Pakatan had already secured the number of MPs but Pakatan wanted to form a government with a strong majority. However, he said that any decision made by Pakatan would be done through consensus.

"Do we want to become a government with a two-seat or five-seat majority? There's also a decision that's got to be agreed upon by Pakatan.

"My personal view is we come in strong, at least with a comfortable majority to be able to initiate changes. We are talking about vast changes." he said.

Speech interrupted

The crowd had started filtering in to the venue since 5pm, fully filling up every available place in the club's field by the time Anwar took the stage for his speech.

This was his first public speech since the Pakatan Rakyat achieved a remarkable victory in the March 8 general election.

The police, including the Federal Reserve Unit and Light Strike Force, patrolled the area but people were allowed to move about freely. There was also a large foreign media presence, including television crew.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408 25After speaking for an hour, at 10.30pm, the police came on stage to interrupt Anwar from finishing his speech on the grounds that he has no police permit to hold a rally.

The police have previously said that the gathering was illegal as it has no police permit.

In response, Anwar said he would show a "good example" by ending his 60-minute speech and told the crowd to disperse.

Organisers claimed a crowd of about 40,000 had attended the rally. The crowd dispersed peacefully by 11.30pm. Many agreeing with Anwar that they had witnesses a historic rally that night.

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