

Anwar to kick off nationwide tour on Sunday
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Anwar Ibrahim has vowed to go on a nationwide tour to clear his name as he battled fresh sodomy allegations involving the opposition leader who sees himself as the 'prime minister in waiting'.
MCPX

anwar ibrahim shah alam stadium rally 020708 13His first stop will be this Sunday in Petaling Jaya when thousands supporters are expected to voice their support for Anwar and to protest against the sharp hike in petrol prices last month.

It seemed as if history was repeating itself. As a warm up to the main event this weekend, thousands of supporters gathered last night to hear the fiery orator talk about the alleged injustice meted out against him.

In 1998, Anwar Ibrahim took to the streets to clear his name after he was unceremoniously sacked as deputy premier and accused of sodomy and abuse of power.

A decade later, the PKR de facto leader is once again forced to do the same in the wake of new sodomy allegations. Like in the past, Anwar maintains that it is a conspiracy to end his political career.

Last night, 10,000 people thronged Stadium Malawati in Shah Alam to hear the charismatic politician speak. Among those present were an army of Hindu Rights Action Force supporters who came armed with banners and placards demanding the release of their leaders.

anwar ibrahim shah alam stadium rally 020708 04As usual, Anwar did not disappoint.

He held the audience spellbound with his blistering 50-minute speech and raised the temperature a few notches when he vowed to "fight till the end the disgusting allegations against him."

His colleagues referred to him as the 'supreme leader' and prior to his arrival, other PKR leaders such as Saifuddin Nasution, R Sivarasa and Azmin Ali had warmed the floor with their "Najib (Abdul Razak) Mongolia" as well as Abdul Gani Patail and Musa Hassan jokes.

In between their speeches, pictures of the trio and the former PKR worker Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, who made the new allegations against Anwar, flashed on the big screen.

To move the crowd, each time their names were mentioned, their pictures were televised to everyone, drawing jeers.

By the time Anwar arrived at 10pm, the audience were already riled up. And before the 60-year-old politician took the microphone, the national anthem and party song were played.

Remembering 98

Peppering his message with doses of how he had suffered during the 1998 arrest, which culminated in a six-year prison term, a black eye and host of bodily injuries, Anwar had the crowd in overdrive.

anwar ibrahim shah alam stadium rally 020708 17"But this is not about Anwar," he reminded them.

"This is about the failure of the administration of the country. Whether it's the judiciary, the economy or the police - Pakatan Rakyat is here to ensure change," he roared.

Malaysia, he explained, is a oil producing nation and yet the petrol prices are one of the highest. He also repeated Pakatan's election promise to bring petrol prices down if they were in government.

"And I'll be damned if I or the other Pakatan leaders were to allow this travesty of justice to repeat itself."

On the night Anwar was arrested on Sept 20, 1999, he was brought to the national police headquarters in Bukit Aman where the former deputy premier was beaten by then police chief Abdul Rahim Noor, resulting in a black eye and injuries to other parts of his body.

What followed after his arrest was a series of unnatural sex and corruption trials.

Besides a very prominent mattress, there was his former speech writer Dr Munawar Anees and adopted brother Sukma Darmawan Sasmita Atmadja who initially pleaded guilty of homosexual acts with him but subsequently recanted their statements, saying they were coerced by the police.

anwar ibrahim shah alam stadium rally 020708 07His wife's driver Azizan Abu Bakar was also alleged to have engaged in homosexual acts with Anwar.

Amid doubts over the forensic evidence used to convict him of corruption and sodomy, Anwar was sentenced to six and nine years in prison respectively. The sentences were to run concurrently.

However, in 2004 a panel of three judges in Federal Court overturned his sodomy conviction by 2 to 1, citing contradictions in the prosecution's case.

Different standards

In his speech last night, Anwar also touched on the statutory declaration by blogger Raja Petra Raja Kamaruddin implicating Najib's wife Rosmah Mansor in the murder of a Mongolian national.

anwar ibrahim shah alam stadium rally 020708 14The PKR leader said he was shocked when heard about the statutory declaration but was even more stunned when the allegations were quickly brushed aside.

"When Raja Petra made a statutory declaration, alleging that Najib's wife Rosmah was present during the murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu the attorney-general called it frivolous.

"But when the case is against Anwar Ibrahim, the authorities are moving with lightning speed, moving their forensic teams in and out of the Damansara condominium," he said.

The timing of the allegations, he claimed, was to derail Pakatan's plans for him to re-enter parliament via a by-election and their announcement of the four BN parliamentarians who will be joining them.

"They are getting more and more worried with each passing day as we inch closer to Putrajaya and this is nothing but a cheap attempt to stop us," he said.

petrol price hike protest july 6 2008 260608Anwar also revealed that he will be going on a nationwide roadshow to explain himself to the people. Before departing, he reminded the crowd of the "One Million" protest at Padang Timur, Petaling Jaya on Sunday.

"On Sunday, DAP's Lim Kit Siang, PAS' Abdul Hadi Awang and all our PKR leaders will be there to protest this injustice. We hope that you will take this message to your friends and family and ask them to turn out in full force.

"We will send a message to the government this Sunday that such tricks will no longer be tolerated by the people anymore.

"And don't forget to pray to Allah to save our people and country," he said to loud cheers.

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