

Defiant PKR supremo woos Kulim voters
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"I will never surrender," thundered Anwar Ibrahim in front of a roaring crowd at the Chinese Recreation Club hall in Kulim, Kedah, last night.
MCPX

It was a show of defiance by the PKR de facto leader against what he called a "blatant abuse and misuse of power to embarrass, humiliate and undermine him."

"They arrested me, they jailed me, they stripped me, they assaulted me and they falsely accused me with all types of wrongdoings.

anwar ceramah in kulim 280708 talk.jpg "No one in this world would have suffered and been humiliated like me. If I am wrong, I will put up my hands and surrender.

"If not, I will fight and continue to fight," he hammered home his trademark rant to nearly 8,000 avid supporters in and outside the hall.

The opposition leader was in this Malay-dominated industrial town to announce his intention to contest in the Kulim – Bandar Baru by-election if an imminent court decision next month declared the constituency vacant.

Since the March 8 national polls, Anwar has embarked on a non-stop campaign trail to keep the government on its toes with his trademark tirade, firebrand salvos and threats to stage a parliamentary 'coup-de-tat' to usurp the federal powers from the grasp of Barisan Nasional.

anwar ceramah in kulim 280708 crowd.jpg He confirmed he had chosen Kulim–Bandar Baharu to earn his right to be a parliamentarian after a 10-year hiatus because it is located close to his Penang hometown Cheruk Tokun.

"Before today I was a bit skeptical to contest here. But upon seeing your support, I can confirm that if there is no hindrance, I will contest here," he told an approving crowd.

PKR's Zulkifli Nordin won the seat - which has 51,995 voters - by a margin of 5,583 against BN's Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir.

Kulim-Bandar Baru is a majority Malay seat, of which 69.5 percent are Malays, 18.6 percent Chinese and 11.7 percent Indians.

'Take the money, but vote for me'

However, Anwar reminded the constituents that the ruling elites would waste no time in executing a sustained systematic character assassination campaign to smear him.

bandar kulim bharu kedah parliament seat results 180708 He also alleged that his rivals would "bribe the voters with millions of ringgit" to ensure "Anwar meets his Waterloo in Kulim– andar Baharu."

"Anwar is an American agent, Anwar's a Chinese tool, Anwar will build Hindu temples, Anwar is a womaniser and now Anwar is after men," he cited some of the allegations against him.

"If they bribe you RM10, demand for RM60, if they give you one batik, ask for five. Take the bribe but vote me in," he said drawing laughter from the crowd.

Anwar said he had to contest a by-election to re-enter into Parliament because he was denied the right to contest in the recent general election as it was held a month before he was eligible to do so.

The 61-year-old opposition stalwart said it was imperative for him to return to the august House as his friends from Sabah and Sarawak had guaranteed full support to Pakatan Rakyat's attempt to wrest control of federal powers so long as Anwar was a member of Parliament.

anwar ceramah in kulim 280708 hall.jpgHe said the federal government ban barring him within 5km distance from the Parliament when opposition leader Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail wanted to table a no-confidence vote against the premier was a clear sign that Umno leaders feared him.

"But I will defy if you challenge me. If I win, I and my Pakatan Rakyat friends will make the Parliament tremble," he roared.

Several constituents at the hall expressed confidence that Anwar could win the seat easily because "voters would surely not want to lose a superstar opposition leader."

If an unknown like Zulkifli can win by a big margin, they said, "Anwar could even win bigger."

Thus, Kulim-Bandar Baharu awaits to become the destination for the Pakatan Rakyat premier-in-waiting to relaunch and resurrect his political career that could well take him to the heights of political power in Putrajaya.