

PKR supremo hints at meeting Peninsular BN MPs
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PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim wound up his two-day thanksgiving tour of Permatang Pauh last night by dropping a hint he would begin discussions with government legislators from "Sabah, Sarawak and the Peninsular in Kuala Lumpur tomorrow morning".

Anwar permatang pauh thanksgiving dinner310808 speaking.jpgAn avid listener among the 1,000-odd Pakatan Rakyat supporters who packed Dewan Expo Pertanian in Seberang Jaya and some 4,000 others milling on its expansive grounds outside who were following proceedings on a video screen, could have missed the reference to the peninsula.

To be sure, it was not the first time Anwar had hinted that MPs from the peninsula were on what his critics sneer is a phantom list of Barisan Nasional legislators contemplating joining PKR ranks to beef up Pakatan numbers enough to take over the federal government.

But it must have been the first time he wove it so sinuously into the text that the audience took a fraction before erupting in rapturous applause.

In the course of remarks on Malaysia's National Day celebrations, Anwar also attempted an eclectic survey of the lyrical phrases that Asian leaders had employed at the inauguration of their countries' independence from colonial rule.

He said founding President Sukarno had called Indonesian independence the "golden gateway" between colonial subjugation and emancipation; founding Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had termed India's freedom from British rule as his country's "tryst with destiny"; and quad-e-azam (Urdu for founder of the nation) Mohamed Ali Jinnah had described Pakistan's creation as a "cyclonic revolution".

anwar permatang pauh thanksgiving dinner310808 crowd.jpgRisky, though, this juxtaposition was of founding leaders not exactly viewed as of the same ideological feather, Anwar was trying to allude to parts of Asia's post-colonial reality of blighted hopes that mock its bright beginnings.

Clearly, he was leading his audience to see as his opposition alliance's mission the goal of delivery on promises contained in newly independent Malaya's Merdeka Proclamation enunciated by founding Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman at midnight on Aug 30, 1957.

Those promises, renewed at the merger of Sabah and Sarawak with the Federation of Malaya on Sept 16, 1963, assured its citizenry economic prosperity amidst the freedoms that allow for the exercise of the appraising imagination normal persons are endowed with.

Permatang Pauh leads the way

Anwar said his victory in the Permatang Pauh by-election was triumphant vindication of that faculty in the common citizen.

"The voters of Permatang Pauh have set right the course that the Malaysian nation should take," proclaimed Anwar. "They have charted the course that the country must take to

reach its destination set at Merdeka and renewed at merger."

By extension, intending defectors from the government bench are merely fulfilling the imperatives of the exercise in national self-correction endorsed by the voters of Permatang Pauh.

"Pakatan Rakyat has shown a solidarity in the run-up to the by-election that shows when they focus on a larger goal they can achieve a unity that can surprise skeptics," said Anwar.

"What you [voters of Permatang Pauh] have shown you can do the rest of the country will follow," he told his audience.

"That way Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks and Kadazans will experience the true meaning of our independence, which is delivery from the fetters imposed by 51 years of BN rule."

Anwar said during the month of Ramadan, Muslims are reminded that the restraint of their appetites is necessary for what it instructs them on the deprivations of the poor, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Thus the PKR supremo blended into an instructive mix the lessons implied both by the celebration of a secular occasion - the country's 51st anniversary of its independence - and the performance of a religious duty - the fasting from dawn to dusk required by the Ramadan observance.

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