

Anwar says did not bar RPK from WikiLeaks forum
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By Anisah Shukry

KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today fingered the organisers of a WikiLeaks forum in England for Raja Petra Kamarudin's exclusion, adding that the blogger was not originally scheduled to participate.

The whistleblower group had originally requested an interview between Anwar and WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, said Ibrahim Yaacob, chief aide to the opposition leader.

"Quick Roll Productions the production company in charge of the interview then made the editorial decision to revert to the original interview format after Anwar asserted he had only agreed to an interview with Assange," said Ibrahim in the statement today.

"The decision (to remove Raja Petra) was made by Quick Roll Productions alone, and Anwar had not forced them at all," he added.

Ibrahim also expressed regret over Datuk Seri Najib Razak's "baseless" allegation that Anwar was afraid to debate with Raja Petra.

"Since the prime minister is so eager to talk about debates, we believe it would be very beneficial for the people and the country if Najib were to engage in a debate with Anwar.

"Najib's refusal to debate with Anwar has people questioning whether the prime minister is afraid, or if he is not committed towards nurturing a democratic country," he said.

The New Straits Times reported Najib as saying Anwar's alleged refusal to debate with Raja Petra was inconsistent with what the latter advocates.

The prime minister said: "It appears that he (Anwar) is not willing (to debate with Raja Petra).

"We must be consistent... we say we practise democracy and we are open, while deploring the government for not being democratic and open..."

Bernama reported that Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin had said Anwar was too afraid to debate with Raja Petra as the latter knew all his secrets.

"If he is a man, he must accept Raja Petra's challenge and refusal shows that he is hiding from the public," Muhyiddin said yesterday.

Raja Petra told an online daily on March 16 that he had received a call from WikiLeaks informing him that Anwar had disagreed to his inclusion in the forum on the topic of global scenario.

The forum on global politics held on March 17 in Kent, England, brought together WikiLeaks

founder Julian Assange and Anwar Ibrahim through Skype.

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