

Pakatan rocks on despite surge in Najib's approval
The Malaysian Insider
March 10 , 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) is putting on a bold face as it attempts to move on and forge ahead despite survey results showing a huge jump in Datuk Seri Najib Razak's popularity yesterday.

Just over four years after it denied Barisan Nasional (BN) its customary two-thirds majority in Parliament, the opposition pact is still brimming with confidence despite the prime minister's approval rating gaining 10 percentage points to move up to 69 per cent.

At MP Nurul Izzah Anwar's fundraiser in the largely upper middle-class housing area of Robson Heights here last night, Elvis impersonator H.T. Long sang "the young ones, shouldn't be afraid" under a banner with the night's theme "Governance under Pakatan Rakyat" (PR) written in bold.

The 31-year-old was able to put on a brave face despite knowing she will likely face Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Raja Datuk Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin who will have the strength of government machinery behind him.

Nurul Izzah (centre) with Lim (left) and Mohamad at the fundraiser. Perhaps she felt more secure in the knowledge that Merdeka Center's poll had found that the middle and upper classes were largely against Najib's administration, with only 29 per cent of those earning above RM5,000 saying they were happy with Putrajaya.

It was likely this voter base in Nurul Izzah's Lembah Pantai constituency that made a minimum donation of RM1,000 per table plus an additional RM27,000 on the night itself to her cause.

The 900-strong crowd were in the mood to rock and roll despite an announcement that Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had missed his flight from Penang.

"Even if he drove back to KL, he would only be able to speak to you at 1am," his daughter Nurul Izzah said, only to be greeted by dozens of voices saying they were willing to wait.

The PKR vice-president announced that she would move three private member's Bills when Parliament reconvenes on Monday including amendments to the Petroleum Development Act to dilute the prime minister's control over the country's fossil fuel resources.

"This will make the PM accountable to the public and guard against the blatant ongoing misuse of Petronas' coffers," the Lembah Pantai MP said.

The crowd listens attentively to a speaker at the fundraiser on March 9, 2012. Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan, who was greeted by chants of "Bersih! Bersih!", also stressed later "loyalty is earned, not demanded and it is certainly not bought."

"They don't understand the government's money belongs to the public. They think it's their piggybank and they are Santa Claus," said the electoral reforms movement chief, whose July 9 rally last year drew tens of thousands to demand free and fair elections.

But it appears the "piggybank" has worked so far, as the poll found the prime minister's support was highest among households earning less than RM1,500 a month at 78 per cent.

These families would have been the most appreciative of the RM500 handout to low-income earners under the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia scheme.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang told the crowd last night that if PR wants to have any hope of wresting federal power, it must win at least a third of the federal seats in the poorer east Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, as well as Johor.

The Ipoh Timor MP said the three BN strongholds, which all have large rural electorates, are "crucial kingmaker states."

All speakers last night were keen to point out to the multiracial crowd at the Thean Hou Temple here that their help was needed to reach the unconverted.

PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu, who was the only leader who did not deliver his speech in English, expressed his joy to see "Malays in a Chinese temple" despite heightened racial tension.

"As long as racism exists, Umno and MCA live on. If racism is wiped out, then Umno dies," said the charismatic leader, who was given a standing ovation as he left the stage.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pakatan-rocks-on-despite-surge-in-najibs-approval/>