

Pakatan rally in Penang draws massive crowd
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By Jahabar Sadiq

GEORGE TOWN, May 12 — Thousands turned up last night at the Penang Stadium in mainland Batu Kawan for Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) rally to protest last weekend's election results.

Most of them, dressed in black, had to park their cars from as far as the Bukit Tambun toll plaza six kilometres away due to the traffic congestion.

PKR de facto chief Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim arrived in the stadium before 8.30pm to avoid the gridlock around the stadium.

At 9pm, the 40,000 capacity stadium was half full with most of the crowd on the football pitch while others were stuck in a massive gridlock outside the stadium.

Many of them inside the stadium were young and waved giant flags belonging to the three PR parties, PAS, PKR and DAP.

Among those who spoke at the rally were PAS deputy president Mohamed Sabu and DAP secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

Mohamed, better known as Mat Sabu, got the crowd cheering when he asked them to laugh and boo the Election Commission (EC) for their "missteps" in using indelible ink that could be washed off and what he termed irregularities in the voting process.

In a fiery speech, Anwar dubbed the May 5 general elections as "the mother of all frauds", a line he borrowed from National Laureate poet Datuk A. Samad Said.

He also blasted Umno and its newspaper for blaming Barisan Nasional's (BN) lower win on the "Chinese tsunami" and their greed for power.

PR parties have complained about irregular voting patterns, suspicious handling of ballot boxes and other issues with both DAP and PAS mulling election petitions to contest the results. "What do the Chinese, Malay, Indians, Kadazans, Ibans and the rest of us want?" he asked, before replying, "We want free and fair elections", a reference to Umno's Utusan Malaysia daily which asked in banner headlines "What else do the Chinese want?".

"The EC were cheats. The last (election)... is the mother of all frauds," he told the crowd.

"In these elections, we demand answers, and we demand the answers now," Anwar added.

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PR officials say they are disputing up to 29 election results and the rallies, which began in Selangor last Wednesday, is set to continue with the next one in Perak today.

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