

**Putrajaya's excesses become opposition fodder for GE14**  
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It might be early days but about 300 people turned up for a forum on the Auditor General's Report in Petaling Jaya last night, reflecting taxpayers' concerns for the apparent excesses of Putrajaya over the past few years.

Among them were young university students as well as Chinese businessmen who wanted to hear what opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had to say about government leakages and wastages.

And they were impressed with the skillful orator, who did not disappoint with his witty remarks about how the government was committing daylight robbery and for its inaction over previous AG's reports that had exposed leakages, wastages and corruption in government agencies.

Among the young ones who gave up their lepak time to come listen to the talk were Nuk Mustaqim, 21, Hafiz Ahmad, 23, and Fariz Latif, 21, all undergraduates reading economics at Universiti Malaya.

Hafiz did not hide his admiration for Anwar, who he said provided a sound argument on what needed to be done to address the recurring problem of wastages involving taxpayers' money.

"We came here to listen to Pakatan Rakyat's ideas, because out there you only get one side of the story from the mainstream media," he said after the forum at the Petaling Jaya Civic Centre.

Fariz said he hoped to join the government some day and would do his part to ensure there was no mismanagement of funds and resources that would burden the rakyat.

Another two undergraduates from Universiti Islam Malaysia confessed that they had two reasons for coming – to see Anwar talk and to hear Pakatan Rakyat's views on how it would address the revelations in the AG's reports.

After the forum, Wan Ahmad Izzat Daniel and Ahmad Amir Idris, both 19, were all smiles as they managed to take photographs with Anwar, who was smartly dressed in black shirt and pants.

During question time, the panel of speakers, which included Serdang MP Dr Ong Kian Ming and Institute Rakyat executive director Azrul Anwar Ahmad Tajudin, was asked if there was any plan to trace the cases in the AG's report to their root cause, to which Dr Ong said that it was his medium-term goal.

A Chinese couple in their 50s, who only wanted to be known as Mr and Mrs Chew, also looked pleased as they emerged from the auditorium after the talk.

To them, Anwar presented a lot of facts and, as such, their hope was that Pakatan Rakyat would make it to the seat of power in GE14.

"I've always been impressed with Anwar Ibrahim, he talks about relevant issues and he is sincere," said Mr Chew, a businessman.

A group of three Chinese men heaped praise on Dr Ong's good command of Bahasa Malaysia as the Serdang MP gave his talk.

They were overheard saying, "Wow, he's so good in his language."

The trio, all businessmen in their 50s, were at the talk thanks to social media like Facebook and Twitter.

One, who only wanted to be known as Derek, said: "Now it's very easy to get information about these forums, my friends email me, there is Facebook and Twitter as well." He added that he had frequented opposition talks since the run-up to the general election in 2008.

Derek's friend, Charlie, said he had come as he was trying to be more "politically conscious".

But didn't the three have better things to do on a Friday night?

"Not at our age," said Derek with a laugh.

Petaling Jaya City councillor Chan Chee Kong, who helped organise the event, said that apart from the crowd that attended, there were going to be at least 10,000 people who would get to see the forum through online live streaming and other media forums such as mediarakyat, where a video of the event would be uploaded on YouTube.

"We want to create awareness on issues that affect the rakyat and these forums keep us connected with the people.

"The next forum in the pipeline will be after the tabling of Budget 2014," Chan said. – October 12, 2013.

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