

One year later, hundreds gather to lament Pakatan's GE13 loss
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By Anisah Shukry

Some 300 Pakatan Rakyat (PR) supporters gathered near Dataran Merdeka last night for a countdown to May 5, in remembrance of last year's general election which saw the opposition pact securing the majority vote yet losing to the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN).

Opposition leaders including DAP national adviser Lim Kit Siang and national organising secretary Anthony Loke, as well as "fallen heroes" such as Bentong candidate Wong Tack and Semenyih hopeful S. Arutchelvan were among the speakers at the event.

The common themes prevailing through the night were PR's "robbed victory" at the May 5 polls, and the BN government introducing the "unfair" Goods and Services tax (GST) less than a year after it retained Putrajaya.

"Even though tens of thousands gathered on May 1 to oppose the GST, an Umno MP had said that no matter how much we protest, the GST will still be enforced," Loke told the crowd, many of whom were holding up anti-GST placards.

"Such is the arrogance of BN, even though they only won the minority vote last year," he added, to shouts of agreement.

Meanwhile, social activist Hishammuddin Rais dismissed last year's elections as fraudulent, and reminded the small but enthusiastic crowd that they represented the majority of Malaysians.

"We are the majority, they are the minority. A year ago, we were duped by the Election Commission, when in fact Pakatan Rakyat won the general election.

"We have no choice but to go down to the streets. I propose that in February or March next year, one million people protest in the streets before the GST is implemented," he said.

But a subdued Lim later told the crowd that the night marked a painful anniversary for PR not only because of its loss last year, but because of the pact's current inner conflict over hudud, the Islamic criminal law.

PAS's push to enforce hudud in Kelantan has been met with resistance from ally DAP, which insisted that the criminal law was not part of PR's policies.

"At the anniversary of May 5, 2013, we (DAP) feel pain because it is possible that Pakatan may split because of the hudud issue. We don't want this to happen, and we believe the public do not want this to happen," Lim said.

"But the DAP must stick to the struggle that it has always stood for since the past 48 years, which is to create a fair and just society."

Several members of the crowd were also at the busy intersection near Dataran Merdeka, holding up banners urging drivers to honk if they opposed the GST.

The din that ensued as motorists gamely honked their vehicles easily drowned out the group's excited chatter and the portable speakers blasting out DAP's "Ubah" song. – May 5, 2014.

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