Entry granted to avoid diplomatic repercussions

By Lim How Pim

KUCHING: The state government allowed PKR de-facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to enter the state during the Balingian by-election to avoid international repercussions, says Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Adenan Satem.

“We allowed Anwar Ibrahim in because if we don’t, there will be international repercussions. In spite of the fact that he came, PKR nearly lost its deposit, which goes to show how much influence he has in Balingian,” he told a news conference at Wisma Bapa Malaysia in Petra Jaya here yesterday.

He added it clearly showed that the opposition leader could not contribute much to PKR despite his presence during the campaign.

“We let him in because we are not afraid of him.”

On the state’s immigration watch, Adenan said the state “does keep a list – the persona non grata and we continue to review the list.”

Asked if Perkasa leader Ibrahim Ali could have been to the state recently Adenan said he might have been but he could not guarantee entry to this controversial figure in future.

“Whether Ibrahim Ali is in the state or not is not relevant. He might have been in Sarawak and left, but we will find out the next time he comes to Sarawak.”

On why some opposition leaders including PKR vice
chairman Chua Tian Chang and Wanita chief Zuraida Kamarudin were barred from entering the state during the election campaign, Adenan said, “I can’t give you the reason. It is the power of the State Secretary.”

Touching on the landslide victory in Balingian the chief minister said it marked a new beginning for Barisan Nasional (BN) in the state and ‘definitely is a morale booster for BN and negative morale for PKR.’

However, he acknowledged that Balingian “is not Sarawak” as there are 70 other state seats.

“But this is a beginning, and you got to begin somewhere.”

Adenan attributed the big victory to the quality of BN’s candidate as well as the commitment and solidarity of BN component parties throughout the campaign period.

“We have a good candidate and all the parties involved ran a smooth campaign. Credit to all BN component parties involved in the campaign. I did play a role but very small.”

On DAP’s ‘Go Rural’ campaign, he said: “They can go rural or wherever they want. They can go to Balingian if they want and let’s see what will happen.”

Adenan offered an interesting metaphor when comparing the efforts between BN and the opposition in Sarawak.

“Both turtle and chicken lay eggs. But when a chicken lays an egg, the noises made can be heard all over. When a turtle lays 100 eggs, all is done very quietly.”
He said the opposition was like the chicken that made so much noise over an egg it laid while BN was like the turtle that laid 100 eggs but remained quietly modest.

Last Saturday, BN retained the Balingian seat by a majority of 6,911 votes. Yussibnosh Balo, 48, obtained 8,194 votes against PKR’s Abdul Jalil Bujang, 55, who garnered only 1,283 votes.