

## Senior citizens pan BN at Penang Speakers Square

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By Susan Loone

The Penang Speakers' Square, created at the Esplanade in 2010, continues to draw passionate views, with many of the speakers being senior citizens who often offer a witty take on issues.

Retired businessman Alfred Charlie had his audience in stitches yesterday evening, contrasting the recent Penang DAP fund raising dinner with BN's 'open house' events.

NONEAlfred, 58, told some 100 people that he believes about 90 percent of Chinese Malaysians are behind Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

This is because they paid between RM60 per ticket to attend the dinner, at which each table was priced at RM10,000.

"That's why the DAP managed to collect half a million ringgit in one night ... you must pay because they need the money, not like the BN," said Alfred, who speaks regularly at the square.

"BN leaders use our money (taxes) to organise their 'open house'. But when we attend, we need to line up. The workers who serve us limit us to one piece of chicken each," he added, drawing laughter and applause.

"We are also given food in boxes. When we ask for more, they tell us to pay for it."

Alfred also related the story of a retiree who intends to "frame" the state government's annual RM100 special aid for senior citizens, which has been given out for the last two years.

He said the individual concerned said the money has sentimental value to him, because even his son does not give him financial help.

NONEAlfred (in white t-shirt) was speaking after Wanita Suara Perubahan (Wanita SuPer) had held a gathering at the Esplanade to demand clean governance and to encourage women to vote wisely.

As at an earlier gathering in Kuala Lumpur, there were scores of volunteers providing security for the group, while police personnel were on hand to ensure that the rally was not disrupted.

State executive councillor Lydia Ong, and three DAP assemblypersons - Ng Wei Aik (Komtar), Jason Ong (Kebun Bunga) and Koid Teng Guan (Sungai Pinang) attended the hour-long event.

'BN gave us nothing'

Another speaker, Haroon Abidin, surprisingly thanked Lim for the federal government's Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia programme.

"The BN government would never have gifted the people with RM500 (for households earning less than RM3,000) if not for Guan Eng's RM100," he told Malaysiakini.

azlan"I want Guan Eng to continue to be our chief minister. All these years that BN ruled (the state), they gave us nothing."

Haroon , 66, who is from Bukit Gedung, accused BN leaders of having done little to address the "rising"

national debt.

"Instead we hear about scandal after scandal, where our money is ripped off," he complained, citing the National Feedlot Corporation's cattle feedlot project as an example.

He is hopeful, however, that the situation will change should Pakatan Rakyat form the federal government.

"I'd like to see Anwar Ibrahim's eldest daughter Nurul Izzah become our first woman prime minister one day," he said.

"She has shown herself to be really capable since her father was imprisoned years ago and now, she shows she can perform as the Lembah Pantai MP."

Asked how he arrived at this conclusion, he said: "I have been following her progress very closely."

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