

Nizar becomes uninvited guest at Umno ceramah

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By Nicholas Wong

An Umno ceramah in Kampar, Perak last night witnessed an unusual twist when the main target of the Pakatan Rakyat bashing session - Nizar Jamaluddin - appeared and sat with several Umno leaders.

Nizar, the former Perak menteri besar and most recognisable face of Perak Pakatan, told *Malaysiakini* today that that the crowd looked rather astonished when he arrived.

He explained that he was on the way to a PAS ceramah some 200m away at Tualang Sekah when he spotted the banner at the Umno ceramah which read: '*Nizar pembohong bersiri* (Nizar is a serial liar)'.

According to Nizar, Umno had been dogging opposition ceramahs in the state for a few months by holding events nearby, but this event piqued his curiosity because his name was emblazoned on the banner.

He claimed that he thus attended the event unplanned and in good faith because he believes in opening oneself to examination.

“I wanted to know whether I had missed anything (in examining myself).

“I thought I might as well attend before my turn to speak (at the PAS ceramah),” he said in a telephone interview.

And when he walked right into the event, alone, the first thing he heard was former PKR member Hanafiah Man condemning him at the top of his voice.

“I saw an empty chair (at the front panel) - which was Hanafiah’s - and I took a seat there,” he said, amused.

He claimed that when Hanafiah realised something was amiss and looked over his shoulder, the latter swiftly segued into bashing Bersih co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan and PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim.

The crowd of about 100 or so, according to Nizar, were similarly astonished at his presence while he was “just sitting there and smiling”.

“I think they were *pucat* (pale),” he laughed.

Some of the people there asked him to leave, but he insisted that this gave him more reason to be present, because the theme of the event had named him.

“I would like to hear, I told them. They asked me whether I would like it if they went for my ceramahs, but I said I would welcome anyone,” he said.

In addition, the crowd took the opportunity to boo Nizar at every mention of his colleagues in Pakatan Rakyat.

Nizar decided to leave after half an hour of the event, but not before shaking Hanafiah’s hand.

“He was completely abashed, his face was completely different,” he cracked.

‘Good for democratic process’

He then went to the PAS ceramah to explain himself, and the crowd was similarly astonished at the PAS leader’s spontaneous detour.

But the response appears to have been good so far for Nizar, with one person sending him a text-message congratulating him and saying it was a “new era” in politics.

“My phone was also ringing non-stop from 2am onwards,” he added, laughing.

When asked if he might make a habit of it, he was upbeat on how it would affect politics, but remained non-committal.

“Maybe this would be a good move, for a brighter democratic process,” he said, explaining that it would keep a lid on what politicians say at ceramahs.

On a more serious note, though, the Pasir Panjang assemblyperson hopes that he managed to make a point by crashing the Umno event.

“I hope they think that, if he (Nizar) is a serial liar, why do they stop talking when he is there?” he opined.

He lamented the “very dangerous” messages that Umno is sending to Malay villagers.

Among other things, they ran down PAS’ dealings with Ambiga describing the Islamic party as following a Hindu woman who was “pro-LGBT and anti-Syariah”, according to Nizar.

On dealing with the hostile environment, Nizar chuckled and said: “It takes a lot of patience.”

'Nizar should mind his own business'

When contacted, a speaker at the Umno event Saarani Mohamad criticised Nizar for “trespassing” into another party’s event and said that he should have minded his own PAS event instead.

In a text-message to *Malaysiakini*, he denied that the speakers at the ceramah had suddenly stopped attacking Nizar, stressing that they had “followed the original script”.

“Nizar was not focusing on the ceramah, he was instead chatting with the people beside him,” said Saarani, the Kota Tampan state legislative assemblyperson and state exco member.

In keeping with the previous night’s theme, he had only one thing to say about Nizar: “He’s lying.”

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