

Mahathir: Hear no evil, see no evil in Umno as all being fed

MalaysiaKini.com

Mar 27th, 2016

Dr Mahathir Mohamad and several Umno leaders take to stage with members of the opposition and civil society once again for today's People's Congress 2pm at the Shah Alam Convention Centre (SACC) in an unprecedented rally.

Former deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, former Kedah menteri besar Mukhriz Mahathir and PKR deputy president Azmin Ali will be among the 19 lined up to speak

Malaysiakini brings you live updates as the event unfolds.

LIVE UPDATES

6.30pm: As he wraps up his speech, Mahathir says he would even drive a lorry to bring the Citizens' Declaration to the palace.

"Earlier someone (Mukhriz) said I will drive a lorry. I can drive a car but if the lorry has that thing (declaration), I will drive it..

"I want to show to the palace the rakyat's sentiments towards Najib," he says.

Throughout his speech, Mahathir took numerous broad shots at Najib, Rosmah and their supporters.

The Save Malaysia gathering ends at 6.30pm with a press conference by Mahathir and the leaders.

This concludes Malaysiakini's LIVE coverage of the congress.

6pm: Mahathir takes to the stage as the final speaker to cries of "Reformasi!" - the same word chanted by anti-Mahathir activists during the 1998 Reformasi protests.

Mahathir recalls that he was jumping for joy when Abdullah Badawi appointed Najib as his successor.

"This is Tun Razak's son...he must be like his father. But unfortunately he is 'a bit' different," says Mahathir, when the audience shouted "a lot!".

Mahathir says he even quit Umno for the first time to push for Najib's appointment, as he is indebted to Tun Razak who had similarly appointed him as prime minister.

After Najib was appointed, Mahathir says he began to realise that Najib actions did not fit

that of a prime minister.

"He (Najib) likes to use money to gain popularity...This is bribery, corruption.

"Buying the people's support by giving away money...not his money, our money!" he stresses.

Mahathir also repeats his claims of Najib "worshipping money" above all else and saying that "cash is king."

Mahathir also condemns those around Najib as being on his payroll, using the now popular term, 'pemakan dedak' (literally, those eating animal feed).

Muhyiddin regrets helping to oust Pak Lah

5.30pm: Suspended Umno number two Muhyiddin Yassin starts his speech by saying he never dreamt of a day when he will be sitting next to Lim Kit Siang.

"Maybe now the time has come for mature politics in Malaysia. We are no longer bound by ideology or history.

"We have reached a state that requires us to unite and save Malaysia," he says.

Muhyiddin says that while he may not be wearing the same shirt as Mukhriz, they both belong to the same group of those who were shunned in Umno.

The Pagoh MP also quips that he regrets pushing for former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's resignation after BN's dismal performance in the 2008 general elections.

"At that time there was no calls for my sacking from the party...We only want the prime minister to step down.

"His replacement will be decided by BN and Umno...that is the reality."

Azmin: We suffered under Dr M, but this is for the future

5.20pm: PKR deputy president Azmin Ali says the opposition and civil society leaders who signed the declaration have faced many tribulation under an oppressive system, including during Mahathir's premiership.

"We have been victims. Before Anwar was arrested (in 1998), I was arrested first...The home minister at the time was Mahathir.

"It is okay. That is history. We want to be a better person, not a bitter person.

"I want to be a better person because a bitter person will complain about the past but a better person will take positive steps for the future," the Selangor Menteri Besar says.

Mukhriz's flesh and blood is Umno

4.45pm: Former Kedah menteri besar Mukhriz Mahathir says after signatures for the declaration are collected, they will be submitted to the council of rulers.

"Mahathir said he will collect the signatures, place them on a lorry and he himself will drive the lorry.

"But I'm not sure whether his license is still valid or otherwise," says Mukhriz jokingly about his 90-year-old father.

4.30pm: Mukhriz says he stands on stage still wearing the red colour Umno uniform.

Someone in the audience shouted, "Buka!" (Take it off!).

"My flesh and blood is Umno...It is not so easy for me to change," says Mukhriz.

"I know there are many Umno members in this hall but they are not wearing the uniform."

He also repeats his stand that the Save Malaysia movement is to replace Najib with another Umno prime minister.

4.20pm: PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli describes the crowd as being "weird and diverse".

Among others, he says he shares the same alma mater as Umno veteran Sanusi Junid and the same lawyer as Ling Liong Sik.

"I'm sure there are also many here whom I had blocked on Twitter...," he quips.

Rafizi, as such, says he will only focus his attention on Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor.

"I will not disturb you if you don't take the rakyat's money!"

Rafizi repeats his pledge to disclose Official Secrets Act (OSA) documents linked to the Armed Forces Fund (LTAT) at the Pakatan Harapan rally in Ampang Jaya tomorrow.

Ambiga thanks Najib for uniting foes

4.10pm: The next speaker is Hakam president Ambiga Sreenevasan. As she gets on stage, someone in the audience shouts, "Buat Bersih 5!" (Organise Bersih 5).

In her speech, Ambiga reiterates, "Enough is enough!" to Najib's rule.

At the same time, she also urges for a discussion on jailed former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's release.

"He has suffered enough. His family has suffered enough," she stresses.

Ambiga also sarcastically thanks Najib for uniting the people from varying sides of the political fence.

"Oppression unites the people against the oppressor," she points out.

'Save M'sia not threat to Malays'

4pm: Amanah deputy president Salahuddin Ayub stresses the Save Malaysia agenda is not one that is out to destroy the Malays.

He also cites a popular anecdote of travellers who had commented they found Islamic values in Western countries, when the same is lacking in Muslim majority countries.

"In Norway we can be safe, but here, we go to the mosque and our shoes can go missing," he points out.

Salahuddin also reminds the Malays that their rights are well protected under the federal constitution.

"We want good Malays, good Chinese, good Indians, good jabatan (civil service) leaders.

"Good Malay leader like (Malaysia's second PM) Abdul Razak, good Chinese leaders like (Malaysia's first trade minister) Tan Siew Sin...," he says.

MIC veteran joins in, calls BN to wake up

3.50pm: Former MIC secretary-general S Murugesan says the time has come for him to stand up and be counted.

"My friends in BN, for how long will you remain silent?"

"How long are you going to defend the indefensible?"

Murugesan also says loyalty to a leader should be given only so long as the leader in question remains loyal to principles on which the country was founded.

Husam: Thank God for just 1MDB, not 2MDB, 3...

3.40pm: PAS Salor assemblyperson Husam Musa says that all Malaysians should have the

same right to reject a corrupt government.

"Thank God we only have 1MDB. Not 2MDB or 3MDB," he quips, adding the situation would otherwise have been much worse.

Husam says the calls for Najib's resignation should not be turned into a racial or religious issue.

"It is not an option, but an obligation for all of us.

"Asking a prime minister to resign should not be a big deal. If Najib goes, Malaysia can still grow," he says.

3.20pm: Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah calls on the people to not only change the rulers, but also change the rules.

Maria said she is speaking in her individual capacity, but the calls for institutional reforms have been championed by civil society groups all along.

Mahfuz: Every reason to avenge Dr M but...

3.10pm: PAS Pokok Sena MP Mahfuz Omar, who is the eighth speaker, says many leaders present here today have a history of opposing one another.

"Myself and Mahathir, he was my father's friend. They came from the same village. Mukhriz is my friend.

"But Mahathir was once in power. If I have political vengeance, I would not be here with him today."

Mahfuz says he has every reason to want revenge, because Mahathir was the one who had signed the letter when he was detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

"What we must think about is not just for today, but for the future.

"If we were to hold a vengeance, the ones who will be victimised are our future generations."

2.50pm: True to his fiery style, Kuala Langat MP Abdullah Sani Abdul Hamid stirs up the hall when he takes the stage and rallies workers against Najib.

The acting Malaysian Trade Unions Congress (MTUC) president says he had received thousands of complaints from workers who had been unfairly dismissed from their jobs.

Unlike during Najib's present rule, Abdullah Sani also says prices of goods and services did

not rise as drastically when Mahathir was in power.

The audience greets Abdullah Sani's speech with cheers and claps, with some in the front row remarking they are surprised that such an unassuming looking man could be so loud.

Kamarul Azman says Umno has sacked him

2.40pm: Kamarul Azman Habibur Rahman, leader of GKCM, a group of roughly 200 Umno branch leaders, tells the audience he takes his hat off to DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang.

"YB Lim, I take my hat off to you. We are the new breed in Umno. The Malays need not be afraid of Lim Kit Siang. Be afraid of Najib.

"Malays are now capable of thinking. We shouldn't be afraid," he says.

At the same time, he tells the Pakatan Harapan leaders that they will "play this game (politics) fair and square."

"Let the best man win...We are no longer politicking based on parties, but on what is best for the country."

Kamarul Azman also says he has received a letter from Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, informing him that he has been sacked from the party.

However, he says he will ignore the letter saying Tengku Adnan has no integrity to sack him.

'I used to be Najib's biggest fan'

2.20pm: After Zaid, Syed Saddiq comes up on stage again as the second speaker and quips, "I have the honour of introducing myself.

"The beauty of being the emcee, speaker and time keeper is, there is no one to ring the warning bell."

This, he says, is an example of how a concentration of power has impacted Malaysia's democracy.

Syed Saddiq says he used to be prime minister Najib Razak's "biggest fan" and he was even labelled as a "bootlicker" because of it.

"If you (Najib) knew me one year ago, I was one of your biggest fans.

"I thought you were a genuine reformist for repealing (sections of) the University and University Colleges Act (UUCA) and Internal Security Act (ISA).

"I genuinely supported you but when the 1MDB (scandal) hit, all those reforms were (held) back."

Zaid: No Malay, Islamic agenda without integrity

2.10pm: Syed Saddiq as the day's moderator says each speaker will be given 11 minutes to deliver their speech. He warns that a first warning bell will be rung at 10 minutes, and the second a minute after.

Zaid goes on stage as the second speaker. He urges the people to go down to the villages and talk to the ones who may not understand how corruption contributes to their poverty.

"There is no agenda, be it the Malay agenda, Islamic agenda or any agenda that can be implemented if the leader has no integrity," he says.

He also takes a shot at attorney-general Mohamed Apandi Ali for proposing tougher amendments to the Official Secrets Act (OSA).

2pm: Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad is on centrestage along with Muhyiddin, Zaid and other leaders endorsing the Save Malaysia movement.

The gathering officially kicks off and Mahathir will be delivering the final address.

The hall accommodating 1,200 is packed and roughly 100 are still standing outside.

Unlikely bedfellows arrive

1.45pm: Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali arrives at the venue. He is greeted with cries of "Selamatkan Malaysia!" and "Bebas Anwar!" The original Citizens' Declaration document was criticised by Anwar's supporters for not explicitly including a demand to release him from prison.

1.30pm: Former MCA president Dr Ling Liong Sik has just arrived at the venue. Ling is one of the 42 initial signatories of the Save Malaysia Declaration.

Inside the hall, the emcee has started calling the guests to take their seats.

Shortly after, suspended Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin arrives to cries of "Reformasi", "Lawan tetap lawan!" and "Takbir". Muhyiddin is slated to speak later today.

1.10pm: The hall currently still has only around 100 people. And out of the number, almost half are media practitioners, many whom are already seated while some are busy preparing their video equipment.

Zaid is already in the hall, together with former Umno leader Khairuddin Abu Hassan and former PAS Youth leader Suhaizan Kaiat.

Outside the hall, delegates are still wandering around making small talk to each other. Apart from the Congress' secretariat members, activist Hishamuddin Rais is also seen talking to the other delegates.

Other top leaders have yet to arrive and no uniformed police presence is seen, nor are there police cars situated anywhere near the venue.

12 noon: With two hours to go before the official start of the Save Malaysia gathering, invited guests and leaders have begun arriving at the Shah Alam Convention Centre, Selangor.

A crowd of close to 100 guests are waiting to enter the venue hall where 1,200 seats have been set up.

Among those spotted are Parti Amanah Negara secretary-general Anuar Tahir, Gabungan Ketua Cawangan Umno Malaysia (GKCM) members and Asia's top debater Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman.

11am: After the initial shock of seeing Dr Mahathir Mohamad together with DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang inking the Citizens' Declaration has worn off, seeing them again today would not raise many eyebrows.

Nevertheless, the People's Congress set to occur today is still significant as high-profile leaders from both sides of the political divide as well as prominent civil society leaders will gather again, this time to speak up on what former law minister Zaid Ibrahim said is about "what's happening in the country".

Zaid first mooted the gathering last month, in urging the people to rally behind Mahathir in calling for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's resignation.

Of course, the grand finale will see Mahathir himself taking the stage today, but others such as former deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, former Kedah menteri besar Mukhriz Mahathir and PKR deputy president Azmin Ali will be among the 19 lined up to speak.

Whether today's gathering will bring about change remains to be seen. But today's proceedings starting 2pm at the Shah Alam Convention Centre (SACC) is undoubtedly unprecedented.