

Dr M swamped by public as he takes to streets for signatures

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An old petite lady walking through the night market near Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman last night was heard asking Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah what the commotion was.

Maria patiently explained to her about the Citizens' Declaration and the Save Malaysia movement's endeavour to remove Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and enforce institutional reforms.

Without hesitation, the old lady signed the declaration and went about her way.

Last night, in their bid to achieve their goal of gathering one million signatures for the Citizens' Declaration, the Save Malaysia group had gone out to the masses at the night market.

Armed with clipboards of the declaration and pens, members of the group trawled the sprawling night market to urge people to pledge their signatures to the cause.

Many of their leaders were also present to lend their star power to attract more signatures, including former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was swamped by an adoring public, as he walked about the market.

Though Mahathir was flanked by his bodyguards, droves of people were allowed to take pictures with him or hand their signed declarations to him personally.

At one point, the nonagenarian even allowed an unknown lady to sign the declaration on his back.

Many people also clamoured to take pictures with the various other personalities present such as Selangor Menteri Besar Mohamed Azmin Ali, PKR Batu MP Tian Chua, youth leader Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, former Bar president Ambiga Sreenevasan as well as Maria.

Other prominent figures who were there included PAS Pokok Sena MP Mahfuz Omar and former Batu Kawan division leader Khairuddin Abu Hassan.

Throughout the walkabout, Chua was also heard urging the people to sign as he shouted cheerfully, "Mari, mari, tandatangan Deklarasi Rakyat Malaysia. Selamatkan Malaysia. Rakyat berani, Malaysia selamat." (Come, come, sign the Citizen's Declaration. Save Malaysia. The rakyat are brave, Malaysia is safe)

Speaking to reporters even as she was trying to get people to sign copies of the declaration,

Ambiga said she was surprised by the response they were getting.

"Actually I'm very surprised because I didn't expect so many people to be so willing to sign.

"(This signifies) there are a lot of people who are fed up and they're not afraid to take a stand," she said.

'That money is rakyat's money'

One woman who signed the declaration, Nurul Fitrah Osman, 26, said plenty of her friends are eager to sign the declaration.

"A lot of them want to sign. A lot. It's just that we didn't see them before, but today we did (so we signed it)," she said to Malaysiakini and other media last night.

She was accompanied by her sister, Husnah Osman, 24, who said she does not believe Saudi Arabia was the source of the RM2.6 billion.

"I don't really believe it. I think that money is the rakyat's money," she said.

"Who has that much money to donate RM2.6 billion?" Nurul Fitrah added.

Speaking to a crowd of about 200 when he stopped briefly in front of Semua House earlier during the walkabout, Mahathir also asked a similar question.

"Who has that much money? Show us. Which bank was used to save the money?

"What business gave him so big profits that he can give to Najib US\$681 million or RM2.6 billion?" the longest-serving prime minister questioned.

Najib must be brought down as he is destroying the country, he said, urging the people to sign the declaration.

Azmin, who spoke after Mahathir, also described Najib as a "destroyer", who is destroying the country's economy and politics.

"This is not revenge or personal but we have a responsibility as Malaysians who love the country to save our country.

"Enough is enough. Let's sign this declaration. Are you ready?" Azmin thundered.

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