

Dr M admits the opposition has valuable role to play
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A big crowd turned up at the Straits Quay Convention Centre in Penang to witness former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng share the same stage today.

The event "Quo Vadis Malaysia?" was organised by the Penang Institute as part of the Citizens' Declarations nationwide roadshow.

Penang executive councillor Dr Afif Bahardin, who moderated the event, claimed this was the biggest crowd to attend an event related to the Citizens' Declaration.

Mahathir himself was rather pleased to see the sizeable audience although it was quite expected as Penang is ruled by the opposition.

During his speech, Mahathir finally admitted that the opposition has a role to play in a democracy.

This is the man who had his opponents jailed under the Internal Security Act during his tenure as prime minister from 1987 to 2003.

He said the opposition never agreed with him but that was not a problem.

He added that his opponents were at times too personal that they refused to sit on the same table with the government.

He said it was okay for the opposition to disagree with him, although he was not very much liked by DAP senior leader Lim Kit Siang, and his son Guan Eng.

"I needed them to tell me if I was doing things right or else I would think that I am doing everything right," Mahathir said.

"They are like a mirror, sometimes you need a mirror to tell you how ugly you are," Mahathir added.

"But I would like to assure them that I do listen to them, and if what they said was good, I'd plagiarise it as my own," he said, drawing laughter from the crowd.

"Having the opposition is a good thing but of course I need to have a two-thirds majority," he added.

However, Mahathir said he did not have the money to buy the two-thirds majority.

He said even his last drawn salary after his 22 years tenure at RM20,000, was not enough to buy votes.

Mahathir then went on to explain the controversy around the 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion in Prime Minister Najib Razak's private bank accounts.

He said now only the people's voices can save Malaysia by ousting Najib which is why there was a need for the Citizens' Declaration.

"When citizens speak, the rulers will listen. The more people sign this declaration and give their ID numbers, the safer you are," Mahathir said.

"There is safety in numbers, there are big prisons in Malaysia but they cannot imprison 10 million people," he added.

Mahathir assured the crowd that only his head will be on the chopping board, not the people's.

Skepticism regarding Citizens' Declaration

Meanwhile, Guan Eng said he is aware that many are sceptical if not cynical about the Citizens' Declaration.

"Because there is too little talk on what is next after Najib," he said.

"They want to know more about what is in store for the future and not just about ousting Najib.

"This is where Mahathir has provided the answer, in the Citizens Declaration."

Lim said no PM in history, including Mahathir, had permitted Malaysia to descend to such unimaginable depths.

This he said included the 1MDB RM50 billion scandal that caused the sharpest depreciation of the ringgit and the implementation of the goods and services tax, which had caused price hikes, and not price drops, as claimed by then deputy finance minister Ahmad Maslan.

"Which is why we are asking *Quo Vadis* (Where are you going) Malaysia? *Kalau bukan kita, siapa lagi? Kalau bukan sekarang, bila lagi?*" Guan Eng asked (If not us, who else? If not now, then when?).

"We should not be blamed for working together to stop the country from bleeding," he declared.

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