

**Boos, thugs and cacophony at Pontian forum**  
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Civility took the back seat in a forum in Pontian, Johor last night which saw a DAP speaker being escorted out of the venue for 'safety reasons' while MCA claims that they were harassed by a group of thugs.

chua tee yong interview 110309 05The forum titled 'What kind of government does the people want', turned into a showdown of sorts between MCA and DAP supporters, who filled up the hall at an independent school in Pontian.

The two groups combined, made up about 1,000 people.

The three speakers at the event were Deputy Agricultural and Agro-Based Industries Minister Chua Tee Yong (left), Serdang MP Teo Nie Ching and prominent political commentator Koh Kok Wee.

Both Chua and Teo hail from Johor but are on opposite sides of the political divide. Chua is also the MCA central committee member while Teo is the DAP assistant national publicity secretary.

During the forum, there were heated exchanges between the duo and the atmosphere was described as tense, but under control.

Eye-witnesses claim that Teo, who was formerly a lawyer and member of the Universiti Malaya Chinese debate team, had the upper hand against Chua, who was formerly a chartered accountant.

However, tensions began to simmer during the questions and answers session when one MCA division leader asked Teo if she dared to proclaim that no one in DAP was corrupt.

Who is not corrupt?

According to anecdotal accounts, Teo replied that DAP will take action on its members or leaders whenever evidence is adduced and challenged her inquisitor whether MCA was free from corruption.

This led to a boisterous response from DAP and Pakatan Rakyat supporters in the hall and a heckling match erupted between them and the MCA supporters.

teo nie ching uncensored 120908 01Eye-witnesses claim the chairperson of the forum was unable to keep things under control and the ruckus lasted five minutes.

After the crowd calmed down, all three speakers made their concluding remarks with Teo (left) being the last to speak.

The feisty lawyer-turned-politician took several parting shots at MCA, bringing simmering tensions to a boil, prompting angry shouts of disapproval by the party's supporters.

At this point, MCA national organising secretary and Pontian MCA division chairperson Tee Siew Keong was allegedly overheard saying "don't let her leave the hall".

This was heard by two independent eye-witnesses.

Another witness claimed that one individual who reeked of alcohol tried to storm the stage in an aggressive manner, but was held back by a MCA division leader.

Seven car escort

According to Johor DAP Youth chief Tan Hong Pin, he did not hear Tee uttering the alleged threats but was compelled to instruct "five burly men" to usher Teo out of the venue when things got ugly.

In addition, he also arranged for seven cars to escort Teo to the Simpang Reggam toll booth on the North-South Highway.

"We can't afford to take any chances," he said.

Apparently amused by the situation, Teo wrote on the Facebook page to assure her supporters that she did not feel intimidated.

chua soi lek resign 020108 tee siew keong "This is the first time I have been escorted by seven cars to the highway. Thank you. I am okay. I have never been scared of MCA in my entire life," wrote Teo.

Contacted later, Tee (right) denied that MCA was behind the ruckus and denied threatening Teo. Instead, he accused DAP of creating a scene.

"If there are such (threats), then they should lodge a police report. They should not cause a scene. They have a guilty conscience," he said.

Tee also insinuated that DAP had hired about 10 thugs to intimidate MCA leaders and prevent them from leaving the venue.

"Who was blocking our cars? Who was booing us? Who asked those people with dyed hair to wait for us outside?" he asked.

Columnist: They are all losers

Offering his take on the incident, Koh, the only speaker without any party affiliation, wrote on his Facebook page that both MCA and DAP were guilty and deserved "50 strokes of the 'daban'", referring to a form of corporal punishment akin to the rotan used in Malaysian jails.

malaysiakini acnmc conference 021010 koh kok wee "Honestly, both sides mobilised their supporters and obstructed each other.

"They were jeering and booing each other. Both sides provoked each other. They are all at fault.

"On the stage, the winner of the debate lost their manners while the loser a gentleman. Those below the stage were all losers," said Koh (left).

The forum-cum-dinner function was organised by the Lim Lian Geok Foundation.

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