

Prove It If You're Equally Good, Opposition Told

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysians would benefit from the energy of the opposition parties should it be channelled to further improving many of the government's initiatives like Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M) and 1Malaysia Menu restaurants, according to a university student.

"But, alas, opposition leaders choose to criticise...or rather, condemn almost everything that the government has done, including the KR1M and 1Malaysia Menu, which aim to lessen the burden of daily living of urbanites," said the third-year student of the International Islamic University, here.

Requesting to be known only as Shera, she said opposition leaders should be more mature and give credit to the government where it was due and not just condemn its every initiative.

"If they don't want to contribute positive ideas, then they should come up with a better concept of their own KR1M and 1Malaysia Menu and implement them in states where they're in power," she told Bernama when met at KR1M in Wangsa Maju, here.

Or else they were just empty cans, she said, adding that she managed to save several ringgit from the monthly RM80 spent on necessities by patronising the KR1M.

Are they really empty cans which make the most noise? For those who share Shera's sentiments, it could be tiresome to hear only words of attack from the opposition against any well-intended government initiative.

The latest are the KR1M and 1Malaysia Menu. Perhaps the detractors are not farsighted enough to realise that these two initiatives show that the people's concerns are being looked into and tackled by the government.

But then, which opposition would not be worried seeing the government increasingly gaining acceptance with such ideas and efforts as the 1Malaysia concept, and which is now solidifying the people's support with the two initiatives that benefit many urbanites, once said to be strong supporters of the opposition?

Could it be that doubts are raised not really out of concern for the people, but more so out of fear that the urban ballot boxes in the coming 13th General Election could tilt away from the opposition?

Criticisms by the opposition were quickly echoed by their supporters through the social media, questioning why should the government get involved in business such as the KR1M, and the claim by an opposition member of parliament that he paid a higher price for food at a 1Malaysia Menu restaurant, quickly making the rounds.

The post 12th General Election saw the opposition pact of DAP-PAS-PKR gaining control of four states, which was a big enough platform for them to walk their talk and put on show better people-oriented programmes, if they were sincere.

But have they done anything equally good for the people like the KR1M and 1Malaysia Menu since coming into power in these states three years ago? Maybe, they have just one story to tell -- about a Menteri Besar who ate a RM3 'nasi bungkus' for lunch.

Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia secretary-general Datuk Dr Maamor Osman said the KR1M and 1Malaysia Menu initiatives were still new and there might be room for improvement.

"I suggest that the suppliers of products to KR1M and operators of the 1Malaysia Menu restaurants have their own in-house quality control to ensure the people get their money's worth," he said, in reference to claims that the products sold at the KR1M are of low quality and cost more than in the supermarkets.

He said the authorities too should immediately investigate any complaints to ensure customers' confidence.

"For the opposition, come up with the evidence to prove their allegations. Don't simply make allegations just to create doubts on outlets where the people stand to benefit and get their money's worth.

"But if the allegations was true, the authorities should take action against the operators involved," he said.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai yesterday refuted the allegation by DAP national publicity secretary Tony Pua and urged him to show proof that there were contaminated foodstuff at a KR1M.

Last Friday, Pua claimed that lab tests showed a higher than permitted amount of coliform in the store's fresh milk and nine other products -- bottled oyster sauce, pineapple jam, ice-cream, condensed milk, canned milk creamer, canned ghee, canned sardines and canned chicken curry.

Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia was inspired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak out of concern over the increasing cost of living affecting low-income urban dwellers.

Based on the mini market format, the KR1M, operated by Mydin Mohamed Holdings, provides basic necessities at low prices in convenient urban locations.

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