

## **Kit Siang lauds Dr M's leadership as Malaysians 'walked tall'**

**Free Malaysia Today**

**June 4, 2017**

**DAP veteran claims Malaysians used to walk with their 'heads high', unlike today when they are shy to admit being Malaysians under PM Najib Razak.**

PETALING JAYA: DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang has praised the former 22-year prime ministerial reign of Dr Mahathir Mohamad as one that allowed Malaysians to “walk tall” in the world, compared to the current scenario in which he claimed people are ashamed to call themselves Malaysians.

The Gelang Patah MP admitted to having a lot of differences with Mahathir when he led the country from 1981 to 2003.

He said he had not hesitated to point out the faults and failures of Mahathir's policies even though he had to pay a “heavy personal price” for being outspoken.

“But we cannot deny that during Mahathir's time, Malaysians walked with their heads high all over the world, which is very different from today when Malaysians are shy to admit that they are Malaysians when abroad for they would be mocked and ridiculed as coming from a ‘global kleptocracy’,” he said.

“One may not fully agree with all its manifestations, but during Mahathir's time there was the spirit of ‘Malaysia Boleh’,” he added.

The DAP parliamentary leader said the “can do and dare to do” spirit was no more in Malaysia, but could now be found in China as “China Boleh”.

Mahathir is now the chairman of PPBM, a component party in the Pakatan Harapan opposition coalition that also includes DAP, PKR and Amanah.

Lim said when Mahathir visited China in November 1985 a few Proton Saga cars were given to a Beijing taxi company to gain publicity for the Malaysian-made car launched in July that year.

“Admiring crowds gathered around the Proton wherever it was displayed, astonished that a small developing country like Malaysia could produce its own cars. It was a proud moment for those of us who were there,” he said in a statement today.

“Some 37 years later, here we are desperately looking to China to rescue Proton from total collapse,” he added.

On May 24, China's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group reportedly confirmed its agreement to purchase a 49.9% stake in Proton Holdings Bhd, together with another 51% in Lotus Cars, from DRB-Hicom Bhd.

Proton, which was set up in 1983 as the country's first national automobile company, has been riddled with financial problems over the last few years despite benefiting from government aid.

In 2001, it commanded as much as 53% of the local market share but this plunged to 14% last year as more buyers opted for imported cars as complaints on the quality of Proton cars prevailed.

Quoting a former Malaysian diplomat who had praised the rise of China as an economic giant since the 1980s, Lim said the opinion should be "serious food for thought" for Malaysian leaders, and ordinary citizens.

He said they should ask why Malaysians could walk tall all over the world during Mahathir's premiership but were shy to admit being Malaysians when abroad under current prime minister Najib Razak.

He also asked how Malaysians, regardless of race, religion or even politics, could unite to "re-set" nation-building directions and policies for Malaysians to compete with the rest of the world and not fight among ourselves.

Lim added that China produced about 6,000 cars in 1985, but by 2008 its annual production had surpassed that of the US and Japan combined.

"In many ways, witnessing China's exponential rise to greatness also forces us to come to terms with our own performance, our own vulnerabilities and shortcomings. It is a depressing exercise to say the least," he said.

He said Malaysia's decline in international competitiveness was highlighted recently when it slipped five notches to 24th spot in the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook published by the Institute for Management Development, after having fallen from 14th position to 19th last year.

He said this was Malaysia's lowest ranking in five years.

He also claimed that the country could not take comfort in being the second most competitive Asean country behind Singapore.

**Copyright (C) 2009-2016 MToday News Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved.**

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/06/04/kit-siang-lauds-dr-ms-rule-for-making-malaysians-walk-tall/>