Guan Eng views Najib's speech with caution
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While Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng hails the prime minister's announcement that the ISA would be repealed as “unexpected and good news” if it is true, he views it with caution as two other laws will be enacted as replacements.

Lim questioned if the draconian security law, enforced since 1960s, would be replaced by “a similar law under a different guise”.

“What we do not want is a situation where you pour old wine into a new bottle,” said Lim at an emergency press conference today.

“We would have to see whether his announcement is genuine or sincere, or whether it would be replaced fully by these other two laws,” he added.

Lim (left) said what Malaysians wanted was the removal of the preventive law which allows for detention without trial.

“Cases should be reverted to court and the law severely curbed so that it would no longer be abused,” he said.

“Any arrest must be only for a limited time frame, and it should be referred to court and justified to the judge,” he added.

Lim expressed disappointment that the restrictive Printing Presses and Publication Act would not be abolished, but instead it was merely to be amended to get rid of the annual application for permit.

Other provisions which deals with publication of false news was not addressed, he added.

He noted that he had been a victim of the act and was imprisoned for 18 months for publishing false news related to the alleged rape of a minor by a high ranking government official in the late 1990s.

Lim said Najib's announcement must be looked into thoroughly although externally it looked positive.

He urged the public and NGOs to continue to exert pressure so that the government abolishes other laws like the PPPA.

'Better to have a Press Freedom Act'

“It is better to have a Press Freedom Act to guarantee privacy and right of reply,” he suggested.

“Many press do not give right of reply, that's difficult, because it is very important,” he added.

As a victim, Lim said he was rather happy to hear that the Acts would be repealed as he does not want any other Malaysians to suffer as he had under detention without trial under the ISA and PPPA.

Meanwhile, Lim said he found it amusing that many who used to oppose ISA have now come out to try to claim credit for the abolition of the law.

The truth is, he added, these ministers have never brought up the issue in cabinet meetings.

“I am sure Malaysians can distinguish who is the sheep and wolf in sheep's clothing,” he quipped.

On the lifting of the three emergencies, Lim said it should have been done long ago.

He added that the emergencies were important although they did not have much effect on Malaysia except in the law books.

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