

Guan Eng warns of mat rempit taking over the state
Malaysiakini.com
November 1, 2011

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has expressed fears over the potential of mat rempit 'taking over the state government' by mobilising more bikers to take part in illegal demonstrations.

Lim, who is DAP secretary-general, said he was "shocked" to see the bikers, who seldom issue political statements, challenge and threaten the state government.

He said it was not likely that they could be so bold if not backed by "certain quarters".

"How can they party (berpesta) in the morning without police action, where they were even escorted from Komtar to the state assembly," Lim told reporters in a press conference today.

"I was never shaken by demonstrations before this, but now I feel a little shaken as the group can mobilise about 3,000 people next time and take over the state government," he added.

Noisy demonstration

Yesterday, about 200 mat rempit held a noisy demonstration outside the state legislative assembly on Light Street, accusing Lim of being a racist and demanding for a race track to carry out their racing activities.

Five members of the gang were detained by police, who said they would be investigated for illegal assembly under the Police Act.

The group members said they were representatives of a charity NGO - Pertubuhan Islam Gabungan Amal (Petiga).

Lim said he received SMSes from the Malay community, who told him they disliked the mat rempit culture which could cause disturbances in society.

He added that it was up to the people to decide on the matter as police seem to have endorsed (halalkan) the mat rempit.

He stressed that he was not insinuating that Umno was behind the actions of the mat rempit.

"However, you cannot deny that the mat rempit are also supporters of the BN," he said, referring to the website of Petiga.

Lim denied receiving any letter or memorandum from the group, and ticked off the police for their lenient attitude towards the latter.

'Not genuine mat rempits'

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister I Mansor Othman expressed surprise that the mat rempit could be so organised, adding that he obtained information that many were from Balik Pulau.

Mnsor said many of the youths who gathered outside the state assembly yesterday were college students and "not genuine mat rempit".

He said that the group did not need to rally if all the bikers wanted was a racing track.

“This kind of immature political behaviour is linked to opposition culture. It is not wise and rational at all and to play the race card is very dangerous,” Mansor said.

He said he felt sad for the non-Malay BN component parties when Umno kept playing up racial issues, adding it would lead to a backlash and create hatred among the community.

“If 90 percent of the non-Malay voters do not support Umno, Gerakan and MCA will be finished,” he added.

‘Umno not behind rally’

During the debate on the chief minister’s 2012 state budget speech, Teluk Bahang assemblyperson Hilmi Yahya rebutted Lim’s accusation that he was behind the motorcyclists.

Hilmi reiterated that he officially opened the new organisation in July at Universiti Sains Malaysia, and had advised the members to focus on positive activities.

“If they decide to race, I cannot do anything about it,” he said, adding that Lim spoke as he liked and it was not right.

He also said Lim was “negative and antagonistic” towards the bikers, suggesting that he draws closer to them to better understand their problems.

Arif Shah Omar Shah (BN-Seberang Jaya) told Lim not to demonise the youths but instead consider providing a proper place for them to race, following the proper guidelines.

He said this in response to Lim’s insistence that Umno representatives explain why the mat rempit resorted to calling him a racist, if it was a racing track they had wanted.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/180212>