

## **EC officers' cars damaged by DAP mob in Gelang Patah**

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**By Kuek Ser Kuang Keng**

Two vehicles driven by Election Commission (EC) officers to transport ballot boxes to the tallying centre at Gelang Patah, Johor, were damaged last night by some 200 angry DAP supporters who mistook the ballots for 'phantom votes'.

Police arrested four individuals after the 9.30pm incident outside the Johor Bahru Tengah municipal council in Skudai.

The violence was sparked by rumours on social media that 'phantom votes' were being taken to the tallying centre by taxi and private vehicle to 'defeat' DAP candidate Lim Kit Siang.

Many agitated supporters then rushed to the building to thwart this.

According to eyewitnesses, EC officers taking the ballot boxes did not stop their cars outside the building as other officers had done, to carry the boxes into the building.

Instead they drove up to the building, raising the suspicions of supporters who then surrounded the vehicles.

None of the vehicles, a Perodua Kembara, was damaged and the car key was taken away from the driver.

Some 100 police personnel, including members of the Light Strike Force, moved in to protect the EC officers and ballot boxes from the mob, and provided an escort into the building.

In the scuffle between the cops and the supporters, four individuals were arrested.

The crowd only dispersed after several DAP activists came out to explain that the ballot boxes involved would not affect the election outcome because the results had already been recorded.

None Johor Bahru Utara district police chief Ruslan Hassan (left) explained that the officers had taken the wrong route - one that had not been secured by the police.

Asked if the use of taxis to transport ballot boxes could have agitated party

supporters, Ruslan said the mode of transport does not matter so long as the ballot boxes are safely sent to the tallying centre.

Speaking to several DAP supporters, Malaysiakini learnt that their actions had been prompted by ignorance of the ballot-counting process and severe distrust of the authorities - in particular, the EC.

They thought all the ballot boxes would be taken to the tallying centre for counting.

NONE However, it has long been a practice for ballots to be counted in every voting stream (saluran) - the classrooms used as polling stations.

The result from each stream are recorded on the Borang 14, a copy of which is given to the counting agents of the political parties who observe the process.

The ballot boxes are sealed in the presence of the agents and the Borang 14 is sent to the tallying centre, for the results to be compiled and the winner to be announced.

No counting is done at the tallying centre itself.

Other rumours without basis

Other rumours widely circulated on social media claimed that a power disruption had been planned at the tallying centre to enable additional ballot boxes to be brought in, to manipulate the results.

However, any such attempt will not change the results, which are based on the Borang 14.

NONE It was also speculated that a candidate could demand a recount if the majority obtained is very small, such as the 379-vote majority obtained by BN's Bentong candidate Liow Tiong Lai over green activist Wong Tack.

This is yet another urban myth as a recount is only allowed in a voting stream, when the difference in votes between the leading candidates is less than four percent of the votes cast at that station. It is not based on the total number of votes for the constituency.

Any result obtained after a recount and which has been recorded in the Borang 14 cannot be amended.

Hence, if a candidate wins by a single vote after all the votes are counted, a recount cannot be demanded under the election laws.

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