

Kit Siang: Censure Najib, Palanivel for haze oversight
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Natural Resources and Environment Minister G Palanivel should be censured for failing to raise the haze crisis in the royal address at Parliament this morning, said DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang.

"In failing to address the haze issue in the royal address, the environment minister and the Malaysian government is sending out a wrong message to the Indonesian government," he said in a press statement today.

NONELim (left) said the absence of the haze issue that has engulfed much of the country does not reflect seriousness in wanting Indonesia to take meaningful and effective action to address the ongoing disasters that has impacted the lives, health and economy of its neighbours.

The Gelang Patah MP pointed out that even though the royal address was delivered by the Agong, the speech was in fact prepared by the government.

"In a constitutional monarchy, the royal address at the opening of Parliament outlines the government's agenda for the coming year.

"The royal address is prepared by cabinet ministers outlining the government's legislative agenda and their national priorities," he said.

He added that the oversight was not justifiable as the haze issue has persisted for more than a week.

"It is not that the haze emergency occurred only last night, catching the prime minister and cabinet ministers by surprise so that they could not incorporate the government's concerns, agenda and priorities in addressing the haze catastrophe in the royal address," he said.

'Costly man-made disaster'

Stressing the severity of the situation, Lim said the haze crisis in 1997 lasted three months and cost Southeast Asia an estimated lost of RM9 billion from air travel disruptions, health expenses and impact to businesses.

"What is going to be Malaysia's economic cost of the present haze catastrophe?" he

said.

Malaysia and Singapore have been engulfed in smog from fires in neighbouring Indonesia for more than a week.

An emergency was declared in parts of Johor last Sunday when the Air Pollution Index (API) hit 746, the worst yet since the beginning of this haze crisis.

According to the Department of Environment, the API bands are categorised as Good (0-50), Moderate (51-100), Unhealthy (101-200), Very Unhealthy (201-300) and Hazardous (301 and above).

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