

Malacca Pakatan plans protest at Jonker Walk
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Malacca Pakatan Rakyat is urging a rally to be held at Jonker Walk tomorrow evening to oppose the reopening of the popular street to traffic.

In a statement today, the coalition said that its members have unanimously decided to hold their protest at 5pm near a performance stage on the heritage walk, and that DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang is expected to attend the event to show solidarity.

They urge citizens to participate and object to alleged BN retaliation against voters who had supported Pakatan Rakyat in the May 5 general election.

"Opening the street to traffic is just the Malacca BN government's unilateral move, and does not meet the interests of the majority.

NONE "If the state government acts like a bully, all citizens have the responsibility to step forward and oppose their absurd and vindictive action against voters," the statement read.

In a related development, a group of supporters led by Kota Laksamana assemblyperson Lai Kuen Ban and Air Keroh assemblyperson Khoo Poay Tiong (left) held a press conference and a small protest today at the Jonker Walk World Heritage Park.

They said that the party would pass around a 'Defend Jonker Walk' petition - also at 5pm tomorrow - to urge the prime minister to make legal amendments to preserve Jonker Walk indefinitely, including closing it to traffic.

The DAP supporters were seen posing for photos in front of the bust of Gan Boon Leong located in the park.

It is noted that Gan was the former Malacca MCA chief, a former exco member, Jonker Walk Committee deputy chairperson, and an honorary Mr Universe. In addition, his son Tian Loo is the current state MCA chief.

'Easing traffic congestion'

Previously, Malacca Chief Minister Idris Haron said that the street - often lined with

hawkers and tourists - is being reopened to vehicular traffic from 6pm to midnight every Friday to Sunday to ease traffic congestion.

NONE However, Kesidang assemblyperson Chin Choong Seong had decried the move as political retaliation against ethnic Chinese voters, while Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua had accused Idris (right) of lying.

Pua said that the Malacca executive council had issued a circular saying that the street is being closed to hawkers as well.

"So far, Jonker Street has about 800 stalls providing city-dwellers with many job opportunities and income for countless families. If the government reopens the road, it would affect the income of many hawkers," said Lai and Khoo in a joint statement today.

Although Idris maintained that only the roads are to be closed, while the hawkers are allowed to continue their operations, Lai believed that this would endanger tourists.

In addition, both Lai and Khoo have urged the prime minister to replace Idris for purportedly seeking revenge against Chinese voters after less than two months in office.

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