

Kit Siang to meet critics over 'kangkung' issue

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Under criticism from netizens and social activists, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang will be holding a dialogue session with youths in Kuala Lumpur next week to explain his suggestion that PKR's Machang Bubuk assemblyperson Lee Khai Loon apologise.

Organised by DAP's party organ The Rocket, the event is scheduled to be held at the party headquarters at 7 or 8pm next Tuesday.

Lim told Malaysiakini this morning that he decided to hold the event after reading a news report, in which a group of youth urged him to retract his statement last Tuesday.

"I think they probably did not look at the problem from all sides, or did not properly read the details of my statement, so I am prepared to exchange my views with them and I am prepared to listen to theirs," he said.

However, he denied that it was a move for damage control.

Asked if he would invite Lee to attend, the Gelang Patah MP said he will leave it to The Rocket to handle but he will not extend any special invitation to anyone.

"Everyone can come as this is an open dialogue."

Activists support Lee, blame Kit Siang

On Tuesday, Lim had urged Lee to consider apologising over the latter's kangkung-themed flash mob targeting the prime minister on Jan 16.

He had said the flash mob was "excessive, offensive, and insensitive" and the apology should take into consideration the importance of not allowing irresponsible quarters to look for excuses to incite racial and religious hatred.

Following this, a group of 83 young activists and writers had issued a joint statement on Wednesday, urging Lim to retract his statement as he should not blame Lee for the racial threat uttered by "racists and political hooligans".

When contacted, Eric Ng, an activist who signed the joint statement, said he has yet to get the response from other signers but he personally welcomed Lim's initiative to meet them.

He said that as of today, there are 118 youth who have signed the joint statement and he hopes the young people can attend the discussion next week.

Meanwhile, Lee told Malaysiakini that he has not decide whether to attend the dialogue session as he is scheduled to attend some other events in his constituency on that night.

However, he expressed his appreciation for Lim's effort to open a discussion on that issue.

"This can offer space for everyone, including youth and the public, to participate in the discussion," he said.

He reiterated that his flash mob was aimed at highlighting the price hikes issue but unfortunately, it has been diverted by certain quarters.

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