

Kit Siang: Has the gov't gone bonkers?

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Has the Malaysian government gone bonkers? According to DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang, this should be on top of the cabinet's agenda to ponder over when it meets tomorrow morning.

Among others, Lim expressed concern over "irresponsible" speeches made recently by some Umno leaders at divisional meetings, the slew of charges under the Sedition Act, and the mass arrest on Penang Voluntary Patrol Unit (PPS) members.

"The top agenda for the cabinet meeting tomorrow should be to answer the question right-thinking Malaysians have been asking the past week, whether the Malaysian government has gone bonkers.

"The week leading to the 57th Merdeka Anniversary gives new cause for concern as to the direction and future of Malaysia under the premiership of Najib Abdul Razak," he said in a statement today.

The speeches the Gelang Patah MP referred to are those of Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Mohamad Hassan, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob (left), and Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Mohamad had reportedly claimed that Pakatan Rakyat's agenda is to reunify Malaysia and Singapore, while Ismail had reportedly said Malays are divided into 'Umno Malays', 'PAS Malays', 'PKR Malays' and 'DAP Malays', but no one would dare challenge Malays if the race unites.

As for Zahid, theSun quoted him saying that non-Malays are becoming more arrogant and are challenging bumiputeras, Islam, and royalty.

"What is incontrovertible is that all these three speeches go against the unity theme and thrust of the prime minister's 57th Merdeka message," Lim said, noting that Najib had stressed on national unity in his speech.

Lim also pointed out that even as law lecturer Azmi Sharom is charged under the Sedition Act this morning, Najib gave a speech on the importance of academic freedom on the afternoon of the same day, and questioned whether Najib believed that his speech still has any credibility.

CIJ skeptical

Separately, the Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) said it is sceptical of the Prime

Minister's Office's statement that the recent spate of Sedition Act charges are a "court matter".

"In Malaysia, the attorney-general is both the chief legal adviser to the government as well as having the power to initiate proceedings for any offence.

"The combination of both functions in one person has led to allegations of bias or selectivity in the institution of criminal proceedings, especially against the ruling party's political opponents.

"These allegations are given additional force as those charged under sedition include a disproportionate number of opposition politicians," said CIJ directors Sonia Randhawa (left) and Jac SM Kee in a joint statement today.

It urged the government to drop the charges against Azmi and hasten the abolition of the Sedition Act, which Najib had promised to two years ago.

Azmi was charged under the act for his alleged comments regarding the Selangor crisis, in which he made reference to the Perak crisis of 2009. He pleaded not guilty to the charges.

His charge sheet said the allegedly seditious comments are, "You don't want a repeat of that, where a secret meeting took place" and "I think what happened in Perak was legally wrong. The best thing to do is do it as legally and transparently as possible."