

Penang to table Race Relations Act
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The Penang government is proposing to table a Race Relations enactment to counter racism and extremism in the state, said Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng today.

Lim said since the proposal was shot down when Bukit Gelugor MP Karpal Singh raised the issue in Parliament, the state was planning to table it at the legislature assembly at next year's sitting.

NONE "It was shot down in Parliament because it is under the control of BN MPs; in Penang, we are not under anyone's control; here we are controlled by the people," he said during his speech at the Deepavali open house in Taman Tun Sardon today.

"(With this Act) we will all stand together and will not allow the racists to disturb us," he added.

Experts to have a say

Lim, who is DAP national secretary general, said the state will invite experts from all sectors of community to discuss the subject.

He added that the matter will also be discussed with the state legal advisor.

Lim was responding to a statement by Pulau Betong (Umno) assemblyperson Muhamad Farid Saad at the recent Umno annual general assembly, where he said that the Penang government was acquiring land owned by Malays.

Muhamad Farid urged the federal government to look into the matter seriously by stopping the state to 'open' land which had been previously gazetted for various reasons.

He added that one of the reasons from acquiring a 40ha piece of land belonging to the Malays by the state government in Balik Pulau was for the purpose of building a university from Singapore.

Lim clarified the land was acquired so that Penang could become a centre of education in the region as it plans to attract universities from Australia, Egypt and the United Kingdom to set up branches there.

Other ethnic groups involved

He said that Muhamad Farid was talking 'nonsense' about the large number of Malays who will be evicted from their lands as only 21 percent of landowners there were Malays, while the rest belonged to other ethnic groups.

"Umno is irresponsible for this statement; we also acquire pig, chicken and cattle farms from there, why doesn't Umno mention about this?" he asked.

"We need to do this because we want to provide a conducive environment for universities;" he added.

NONE Lim gave assurances that the families whose lands were acquired would be

compensated fairly and that when the universities were set up, it would be available for everyone, from all communities.

He condemned Muhamad Farid (right) for raising racial issues, and for throwing a spanner in the works of the state government to make Penang an educational hub in the region.

"Universities would not come here when there are controversies; Umno is destroying our programmes, they are anti-education," he said.

"Please do not let bad people who are racists spoil our plans for better education," he added.

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