

DAP: Remove police officer at once
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The Silver Surfer

An opposition leader has called for the the removal of a crime prevention unit officer in Johor Baru over his "outrageous remarks" on the state's crime rate.

"DAP demands the immediate removal of DSP Leow Kian Heong for...blaming others to cover up the police failure to seriously address the alarming crime situation in Johor Baru," said DAP secretary general Lim Guan Eng.

In a statement today, he accused Leow of getting his facts wrong when he blamed the Chinese press for its extensive coverage of crime stories, thereby giving the impression of a deteriorating crime situation.

"The Sunday Star (too) had two full-page articles about Johor Baru being a crime-infested city and on police ineffectiveness in crime prevention, (written by) by editor Wong Chun Wai and former IGP Tan Sri Hanif Omar," Lim said.

He criticised Leow for trying to sweep the issue under the carpet by urging the public not to "racialise and politicise" the issue.

"The Chinese community cannot understand how police incompetence, indifference and inability to stop crime can be racialised and politicised when the victims and criminals come from all races and religions."

Lim pointed out the case of Form 3 student Syafiqah Mohd Borhan who was found dead in a drain in Bandar Baru Uda last year and a 10-year old Nurulhuda Ghani who died after being raped and strangled in Gelang Patah in 2001.

The News Straits Times reported today that a some 200 Johoreans had staged a protest in front of the menteri besar's residence in Jalan Rahman Andak yesterday to express dissatisfaction over the rising crime rate. This was organised through text messages sent out over the past few days.

Police had set up roadblocks but those who came for the gathering parked their vehicles at a school some 500m away and walked to the residence.

The assembly started peacefully as 100 police and Federal Reserve Unit personnel monitored the situation.

However, tension rose later and Johor Baru South police chief Shafie Ismail ordered the crowd to disperse as they did not have a permit for a public gathering.

Two arrested

Two individuals were detained for refusing to comply with the order, as they wanted to distribute pamphlets.

Today, the two - both rights group Suaram activists Nyam Kee Han (photo) and See Siew Mun

- have been remanded for another day until tomorrow.

Their lawyers said that they would be investigated under Sedition Act and for illegal assembly.

Suaram said that Nyam and See were distributing leaflets calling for the setting up of the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) and condemned their arrest.

Meanwhile PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail urged the police to immediately release the arrested duo.

"Instead of wasting time and public funds to persecute those who speak truth to power, the police should have used their resources to step up crime prevention and to apprehend the real culprits," she said in a statement.

She added that the state of crime in Johor has reached a level where there are places in residential areas which residents themselves are too fearful to venture out after dark.

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