

Umno holds one-hour protest at Komtar
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Some 1,000 Umno members and supporters staged a one-hour protest outside the Penang state government office in Komtar this afternoon over the New Economic Policy controversy. MCPX

penang komtar umno protest 140308 anwar traitor bannerThe crowd - which gathered there after Friday prayers around 2.30pm - chanted slogans such as 'Don't sideline the Malays' and 'Don't abolish NEP'.

The demonstration, led by Penang Umno secretary Azhar Ibrahim, to protest Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's declaration that the new DAP-led state government would do away with NEP.

Among those who spoke at the rally included former deputy chief minister Abdul Rashid Abdullah, Sungai Dua state assemblyperson Jasmin Mohamed and Umno Bukit Mertajam chief Musa Sheikh Fadzir.

penang komtar umno protest 140308 angerThere were about 3,000 onlookers as eight FRU trucks armed with water cannons were deployed and the crowd eventually dispersed after the police gave the protestors a five-minute ultimatum.

Organisers described the demonstration as a "protest by Penang Malays against the state government's discrimination and marginalisation of the community".

The demonstrators carried banners in Bahasa Malaysia with slogans such as "Jangan Pinggirkan Orang Melayu" (Don't Marginalise the Malays), "Jangan Hapuskan Hak Orang Melayu" (Don't Abolish Malay Rights) and "Jangan Hapuskan Dasar Ekonomi Baru" (Don't Abolish the New Economic Policy).

penang komtar umno protest 140308 blockadeThey march along Jalan Ria service road that leads to Penang's tallest building Komtar, where the Chief Minister's office is located, shouting anti-government slogans and chanting "Allahu Akbar" and "Hidup Melayu".

When the demonstrators approached Komtar, they were told by George Town OCPD ACP Azam Abdul Hamid to disperse within five minutes.

Four-point memorandum

Musa then explain to Azam that the protestors wanted to hand over a four-point memorandum to Lim, who was sworn into office four days ago.

But when Azam allowed a delegation from the group to do so, the leaders declined claiming that it was pointless to meet a chief minister who had made up his mind "to destroy the Malays".

penang komtar umno protest 140308 very angryA number of Umno representatives will however hand over the memorandum to Penang Yang Dipertua Negeri Abdul Rahman Abbas in a weeks' time.

"This is a Malay country, but Malays are marginalised in their own country," said Ahmad, who also described PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim "as a traitor who had sold the Malays to Chinese and Indians".

When asked whether it was premature to hold the protest as the state government was barely a weeks' old, Ahmad said the Penang Malays were provoked by Lim's anti-Malay statement.

penang komtar umno protest 140308 fru attackIt is learnt that the four-point memorandum included calling on the DAP-led state government to honour and fulfill its promises made in its electoral manifesto; stressing that Umno was still a relevant political party to Penang Malays, calling on the state government not abolish the NEP and marginalise the Malays and to safeguard Malay special privileges.

Although the demonstrators defied repeated orders from the police to disperse, no force was used against the crowd.

Shops in the area were closed for business and traffic was brought to a standstill during the protest.

However, no untoward incident was reported and the protestors as well as curious onlookers left the scene by 4pm.

The rally came hot in the heels of Prime Minister and Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's accusation that Lim was stoking racial tensions by his remark that he would abolish the NEP.

Immediate response from Guan Eng

In an immediate response, Lim expressed regret that the demonstrators were unwilling to accept the decision of voters in last Saturday's general elections.

dap memo on patrol vessels mindef 120907 lim guan eng"The people had democratically elected a DAP-led state government but Umno could not take it," he said, while thanking the police for keeping the situation under control.

However, he said it was Umno's right to hold a demonstration to vent its anger so long the opposition party does not compromise public safety and security.

Lim also alleged that Umno had twisted the facts contained in his statement by claiming that the state government would abolish NEP.

"I only stated that the state government would do away with open tenders and contracts to eliminate corruption, nepotism and cronyism.

penang komtar umno protest 140308 fru2"Our tender awarding system will be fair and just to all," he assured.

Unlike the previous Barisan Nasional state governments, he said the present state government was neither anti-Malay nor pro-non Malay.

"We are pro-Malaysians," he told a packed news conference.

Anwar: What has Umno done?

Meanwhile, Anwar said the Umno-led demonstration was proof that the opposition party was a "sore and bad loser". He added that Umno appeared unable to take defeat gracefully.

penang komtar umno protest 140308 anuar ibrahim "They could not stomach it. The state government is not even one-week old, Umno already described it as anti-Malay and held a street protest," he said.

Instead of protesting, he said Umno should look at its own achievements when it was in power for 50 years.

pkf manifesto launch pc 260208 anwar talking "Until now, Malays in Penang are still living in poverty. What the local Umno leaders have done about it while enriching themselves," he said.

Azhar, who is state opposition leader designate and Penang state assemblyperson, fired the parting shot at the end of today's demonstration.

"This is only the beginning to bring down the state government. Our struggle will not be over until we re-capture control of the state government."

Protest in Shah Alam too

Meanwhile, about 100 people believed to be Umno members and supporters held a protest march in Shah Alam against the new PKR-led Selangor government.

Marching from the Shah Alam state mosque to the state government building a couple of hundred meters away, they carried placards and banners denouncing PKR and its allegedly 'anti-Malay' allies, reported Chinese daily Sin Chew's online portal.

Among the banners, one said: 'New Selangor government: Puppets of DAP'. Another said 'With the abolition of the NEP, Malays will be refugees on their own land'.

The groups dispersed after 10 minutes upon reaching the state government building where about 50 FRU and ordinary police personnel were on standby.