

Kit Siang: Pakatan will help BN prevent May 13 repeat
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, July 21 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will work with its political foes in Barisan Nasional (BN) and do all it can to prevent a repeat of the bloody racial clashes of May 1969, Lim Kit Siang has pledged.

But the political veteran, whose enemies have blamed him for instigating the 1969 riots, also demanded the same cooperation from the ruling pact.

He expressed fear that the repeated mentions of the May 13 incident by BN leaders may contain a subtle threat to voters that the tragedy would reoccur should Umno lose power.

Lim (picture) pointed to the latest May 13 reference made by Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday and asked the Umno deputy president if he had meant to assure Malaysians that a similar clash would not repeat or warn them otherwise.

"I confess I am concerned at the way Muhyiddin raised the spectre of May 13, which had been used in the past decades to create fear among voters as part of the scare tactics to force voters to vote for Umno and BN," the Ipoh Timor MP in his speech text from a ceramah last night.

According to news reports yesterday, Muhyiddin had called on the country's youths to stand united in order to avoid another bloody racial clash like the 1969 riots, which is said to have claimed the lives of nearly 2,000 Malaysians.

"We don't want May 13 repeated," the deputy prime minister had said.

But Lim said Malaysia's political and social landscape have changed significantly since the clash, pointing to the birth of Pakatan Rakyat (PR), a coalition of three parties - DAP, PKR and PAS - which he said promotes multiracialism.

"So could there be another May 13 in the next general election? My answer would be a strong 'No'," he said.

"On behalf of DAP and PR, let me officially respond by declaring that we also do not want a repeat of the May 13 tragedy and we pledge to do all we can to prevent any such recurrence.

"DAP and PR offer to co-operate and work closely with Umno and BN to ensure that there will be no repeat of May 13 in the next general election," he said.

With such cooperation, the DAP adviser pointed out, Malaysians could then rest assured that a similar tragedy would not recur.

But he urged a personal commitment from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak that a peaceful transition would be ensured should PR wrest federal power in the coming polls.

"Tell the world that Malaysia has become a normal democracy and even en route to become... 'the best democracy in the world'," he said, borrowing a quote from the Umno president.

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