

**Penang Government Draws Brickbats For Removing PM's CNY Banners**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- The removal of banners bearing the Chinese New Year greetings of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in Penang has drawn criticism from the people.

Those who spoke to Bernama said the action reflected political immaturity of the DAP-led state government and disrespect for the prime minister.

Political analyst Assoc Prof Datuk Zainal Abidin Borhan said the Penang government showed political immaturity through such action which he felt could turn sensitive.

He said such disrespect for the nation's leader would have a negative impact and could undermine peace and harmony.

"This portrayed an attitude of hatred and it was not a healthy culture for the people to emulate. When such a thing happens, it goes to show that the state government rejects peace and prosperity in the country.

"We do not want enmity to spread in the society because it can spark untoward incidents. Political leaders have to depict an open and rational attitude," he said when contacted by Bernama.

The Seberang Perai Municipal Council (MPSP) removed the banners bearing the Chinese New Year greetings of the prime minister on the excuse that they had been put up without a permit.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said in a press statement yesterday that a small issue had been blown out of proportion.

Datuk Ibrahim Ali, president of the Malay right-wing group Perkasa, urged the Bar Council to investigate the matter, saying it involved the nation's top leader.

"The removal of the banners reflects rudeness. The state government must remember that Datuk Seri Najib is the prime minister. He (Najib) has never oppressed the people of Penang despite the differences in political ideology.

Federal Territory People's Progressive Party (PPP) chairman Datuk A. Chandrakumanan said the Penang government should respect the country's top leader and should align itself with the federal government in matters that did not involve differences in political ideology.

"Festive celebrations are not political events. So, why must this happen. The state government should have been more sensitive in matters that can undermine unity," he said.

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