

'Tanda Putera' public screening will backfire on Umno, warns Guan Eng
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 — The DAP's Lim Guan Eng today warned his Umno political foes they would face a public backlash by allowing cinemas to screen 'Tanda Putera', which the opposition leader has described as a "racist hate film".

The RM4.8 million local film, directed by Datin Paduka Shuhaimi Baba, is supposed to be a factual retelling of events surrounding the May 13, 1969 racial riots that have long been cloaked in secrecy and which Putrajaya had finally greenlighted for general release yesterday.

"This racist hate film on May 13, 1969 riots panders to extremism and again blames non-Malays for igniting the May 13 riots," said Lim (picture), who is DAP secretary-general, referring to leaked reports of the movie's content that allegedly casts his mostly Chinese party in a negative light.

The Bagan MP questioned how the movie with its extremist racial elements would help the country move forward in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's call for national reconciliation in the wake of the divisive May 5 polls.

Lim said Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Ahmad Shabery Cheek's nod for the film's release was tantamount to promoting "lies, hatred and fear", adding that the minister was very mistaken if he hoped to win back support for Umno with the public screening of 'Tanda Putera'.

"Such tactics backfired badly in the recent general election when more than 42 per cent of Malay voters especially young voters abandoned BN by voting for PR," the federal lawmaker said, referring to the BN's loss of the popular vote compared to the 51 per cent combined popular support for the DAP-PKR-PAS alliance.

Made in 2011 by Persona Pictures Sdn Bhd with funding from the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia, 'Tanda Putera' is scheduled for an August 29 screening at local theatres, just in time for National Day.

The film, which carries a PG13 rating, was initially scheduled to be released last November 15 last, but was held back by the Cabinet over fears it may fuel conflict among Malaysia's different races.

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