

**Has Putrajaya gone bonkers, asks the DAP
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By EILEEN NG**

Putrajaya needs to answer whether it has "gone bonkers" – letting Umno leaders off for making seditious statements but charging opposition politicians and now, a law professor, with sedition.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said that is the question the Cabinet should answer at its weekly meeting tomorrow.

"The question right-thinking Malaysians have been asking the past week is whether the Malaysian government has gone bonkers," he said in a statement today.

Lim, the Gelang Patah MP, said the sedition charge against Universiti Malaya law lecturer Dr Azmi Sharon today was the worst blow to academic freedom in the nation's history.

Azmi had become the country's first academician to be charged under the colonial-era law for commenting on what had happened in Perak in the 2009 constitutional crisis, Lim said.

"Has Malaysia's academic freedom in the universities degenerated to a state where law lecturers cannot give their opinion about 'right and wrong' about legal cases?"

"Have we reached a stage where lawyers defending Azmi Sharon may themselves run the risk of committing sedition just by defending Azmi's view on the Perak constitutional case? Is this Najib's meaning of academic freedom and the rule of law?"

Lim said Datuk Seri Najib's speech today, following Azmi's charge, in which the prime minister praised the value of academic freedom to Malaysia showed that the Malaysian government had "gone bonkers".

"Does Najib really believe that his eulogy for academic freedom after the unprecedented prosecution of an academician for sedition would have any credibility at all?" he asked.

Lim also referred to speeches made by two ministers and a menteri besar at three Umno divisional meetings recently which went against Najib's Merdeka message on unity.

Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hassan had allegedly told delegates at the Rembau Umno division meeting that Pakatan Rakyat's main agenda

if it took over Putrajaya, was to reunite Malaysia with Singapore. The island republic left the Federation of Malaysia after two years in 1965, due to ideological differences.

On Merdeka eve, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob reportedly told Gopeng Umno delegates that Malays were "under attack" in their own country and that the community had been divided into Umno Malays, PAS Malays, PKR Malays and DAP Malays.

And yesterday, Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi allegedly said at the Umno Segambut divisional meeting that non-Muslims had become "increasingly arrogant", and that Malays are now paying the price for being kind to non-Muslims, resulting in insults against bumiputeras, the royalty and Islam.

Zahid has since said his remarks were taken out of context and maintained that he only targeted the comments at the DAP and its supporters.

Lim asked whether the Attorney General would charge these leaders under the Sedition Act too. – September 2, 2014.

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