

Kit Siang: Will MCMC use fake news laws against Najib?
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DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang has questioned whether the Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) would levy their proposed heftier fines for "fake news" against BN leaders, including Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"Can the MCMC guarantee that the new law with a tenfold hike in penalties for 'fake news' would be used against both 'sharks' and '*ikan bilis*' (small fish) in government including Najib, and not just against dissent?" Lim asked in a statement today.

He was commenting on MCMC chief operating officer Mazlan Ismail's proposal that punishment for publishing fake news under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act be increased tenfold, to a RM500,000 fine and 10 years' jail.

The government is currently working on a new law to tackle fake news, which it has assured will not be used to silence dissent.

In his statement, Lim claimed that Najib had labelled news about the 1MDB scandal and the identification of "Malaysian Official 1" as fake news, and asked whether those who raise questions about the scandal would be charged.

While Najib has downplayed controversy surrounding 1MDB, including allegations that he received US\$731 million in misappropriated funds, he has not on record dismissed the scandal as fake news.

Lim also insisted he was of "the biggest victims" of fake news, citing Umno's allegations that DAP was anti-Malay and anti-Islam, and that DAP would make the Malays suffer if the BN lost the next general election.

'Wagging the dog'

He also cited allegations by an "MCA *ikan bilis*" that he had sensationalised two pre-Chinese New Year incidents in an attempt to incite unrest among the Chinese community and the people.

While no names were mentioned, this is a clear reference to MCA publicity spokesperson Ti Lian Ker's statement against the Gelang Patah MP yesterday.

Ti claimed that Lim had tried to capitalise on Petronas' original white angpow packet design – a colour commonly associated with Chinese funerals – and the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry's newspaper advertisement, which featured a barking rooster rather than a dog.

Lim, however, said he had not said a single word about the Petronas white angpow.

"Will such an *ikan bilis* be penalised (for spreading fake news)?" he asked.

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