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Leaders asked to keep good image

. Thayalan

A BACKBENCHER yesterday urged State Assembly members especially those holding office not to "carry around millions in cash" or make headlines by being investigated by the Anti-Corruption Agency.

Ahmad Saad (BN-Permatang Pasir) in debating the motion of thanks to the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir for his opening address, said all assembly members especially executive councillors should uphold the image of the State.

"You should not carry millions of ringgit around or get involved in activities which have made States such as Malacca and Selangor famous.

"You must safeguard the image of the State and the nation. Even if one person in high position is caught or convicted for corruption, the world will ask if this means the whole of Penang or Malaysia is corrupt.

"We are well respected internationally through the efforts of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Our image overseas is very good. Therefore we must upkeep it."

Ahmad said he had heard of civil servants in Penang soliciting bribes in return for favours. He said he was not certain if this was true but wanted the State Government to treat the issue of corruption seriously.

He said Penang had changed much over the years due to rapid development and praised the State Government for this.

He called on the Penang Development Corporation to follow the economic development corporations of Johor and Selangor which used public listed companies to carry out numerous business activities.

"In Penang, we have many mega projects but we seem to be giving them to non-Penang companies. The Johor economic corporation, for instance, is very active here. The land on which the former Butterworth district office stood was given to Caymen of Kedah to carry out a project.

"If the PDC had a controlling stake in a public listed company, then it would be able to undertake these and other bigger projects. It is time to do this."

Ahmad said the State Government was doing its part to help Bumiputera businessmen and enhance co-operation between the Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras.

Ahmad hoped Bumiputeras who were given large project ventures would not sell their interest to make instant money but would work hard to make the projects successful.

Meanwhile, Lim Chien Aun (BN-Bayan Lepas) said it was clear the people supported the State Government as it had brought much progress.

He appealed for the reinstatement of State scholarships, especially for those who want to study information technology so as to increase the pool of experts in this area. This would help make the Government's move towards creating a paperless administration a success, he added.

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