

Guan Eng: Quadruple suspensions mask Apco deal
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The suspension of four Pakatan Rakyat MPs is an attempt to divert attention from the federal government's dealing with international public relations firm Apco Worldwide, said Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

Lim, who is also the Bagan MP, said the BN had abused its powers by suspending Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, and three other MPs, to put a lid on their criticism of the deal.

He said Anwar's treatment was unfair as the punishment was dealt out by the Rights and Privileges Committee without giving him a chance to defend himself.

"The act to suspend Anwar (and the other MPs) goes against the principles of natural justice," he said after launching the Penang Trade Events 2011 calendar in Penang today.

NONE "The Parliamentary Rights and Privileges Committee has limited the rights of the Opposition Leader to uphold justice and democracy for the people," Lim (left) said.

Yesterday, the committee's report was tabled and endorsed by the Dewan Rakyat over Anwar's claim that the Najib administration had knowingly employed Apco Worldwide despite its alleged links with Israel, with which Malaysia has not diplomatic ties.

Bukit Gelugor MP Karpal Singh, Gombak MP Azmin Ali and Subang MP R Sivarasa were also suspended for revealing information about the committee's investigation before its report was tabled in the House.

Opposition more determined

Lim said the BN conduct was undemocratic, adding that in the Pakatan-administered states, any opposition member hauled up by the state assembly's Rights and Privileges Committee is allowed to defend himself or herself.

On the DAP's next course of action, Lim said that Karpal, a veteran lawyer, would look into the legal aspects of the suspension, which he added would not affect the opposition's spirit, nor that of its supporters.

"On the contrary, the people will be more committed, determined and will continue with the struggle for justice and freedom," he added.

Lim also extended his condolence to the family of deceased Tenang state assemblyperson Sulaiman Taha.

Asked if DAP would field a candidate when the by-election for the seat is called, Lim said the seat would be contested by PAS, as in the last general election, and declined further comment out of respect for the late state assemblyperson.

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