

Guan Eng flays Koh over 'aggressive' role promise
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Former Penang chief minister Koh Tsu Koon's vow of a more aggressive role for Barisan Nasional to counter criticisms of its rivals in Penang seems to have backfired.

His successor, Lim Guan Eng, today criticised him severely for keeping mum on alleged misdeeds the previous state government was said to have committed.

Lim, who is DAP national secretary-general, demanded that Koh instead answer regarding two scandals that have caused the state government a whopping RM272 million in losses.

"The previous state government under Koh needs to answer allegations of misappropriation of funds amounting to RM230 million incurred over seven years in the Seberang Perai Municipal Council (MPSP)," he told reporters.

"Koh also needs to answer for the Tan Hack Ju controversial RM42 million land deal which landed the state administration in court, where the current government had already paid RM15 million for the case," he added.

"Why does he not answer these questions as they happened during his tenure as CM? He has to come clean on this".

Last year, the state government came to the aid of the cash-strapped MPSP to buy much-needed equipment and funding for facilities.

The MPSP saw a depletion of almost RM230 million from its reserves from 1999 to 2005 due to excessive spending, leaving it with almost no funds to even pay its employees.

Lim was responding to Koh's statement on Sunday that said that Penang BN will be more aggressive in explaining to the people about the achievements of the previous government after keeping silent to the opposition's criticism for the past three years.

Koh, who is also a minister, said he had waited and given the opposition a chance to criticise him and the BN, however in March, the BN would be more active and aggressive in convincing Penangites on what BN has done for them.

Koh said efforts would be made in March to regain public confidence and trust in the BN government's capability of bringing more development to the state.

'Why wait till March?'

On Koh's tactic to regain public confidence in BN, Lim said there was nothing that would shock his administration as it had been practising good governance under the CAT (Competency, Accountability, Transparency) principles.

"We have been complimented by the auditor-general for two consecutive years for good financial management, and Transparency International, a well-established organisation, has also praised us," he said.

Lim said the state government can foresee what kind of tactics Koh and the BN would use on Penangites before the coming general election.

"It is the same kind of tactic Utusan Malaysia uses - to slander, threaten and make malicious claims," he said.

"No need to wait until March... if there is anything to reveal, do it now, why wait so long?"

"The previous state government waited for 18 years and now this government has to do a lot to restore Penang (to its former glory)".

Lim filed a defamation suit against Utusan Malaysia in the Penang High Court last week over an allegedly defamatory article on the DAP.

The CM decided to sue Utusan after the DAP was described in a Dec 20 article as being the tool of a foreign government and that ought to be banned.

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