

DAP gives Penang Gerakan an 'H' for being gutless
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by Susan Loone

Not to be undone by its critics, the DAP has now slapped Gerakan with a 'H' grade for both losing support in Penang, resulting in Pakatan Rakyat's takeover of the state government in March 2008, and for being gutless.

Komtar assemblyperson Ng Wei Aik (right) explained that 'H' stands for Holland, and the party is telling Gerakan leaders to "Go home to Holland".

The phrase is a Cantonese joke that means "You are finished" (or in Malay "bungkus"), a reference to talk that Gerakan will not be able to wrest Penang back from Pakatan.

'H' can also stand for "bo hood", which is used to describe someone who is gutless or incapable of making decisions in the face of a bigger authority, Ng said.

Ng, who is political secretary to Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, welcomed Gerakan's evaluation of the state government, saying its members are also the rakyat and have the right to analyse the performance of the state.

But he criticised the rival party for its "arguments that are not facilitated with facts, but arise out of its own imagination".

"We will not deny or confirm whether their evaluation is on the mark (true or false), but it does not reflect the public perception of our three years in government," he said. "How can you evaluate the state government without taking public's perception into account?"

Ng, who is also state DAP secretary, said Gerakan leaders were out of touch with the people, which was why it would be difficult for them to regain public support in the coming general election.

Gerakan's five-point evaluation

Ng was responding to Penang Gerakan's evaluation of the state government yesterday, where the party gave Lim's administration an 'F' in terms of good governance and performance.

Gerakan had zeroed in on five areas to evaluate DAP's competency, accountability and transparency (CAT) government.

It also touched on the Pakatan government's projects, including the controversial subterranean Penang International Convention and Exhibition Centre (sPICE), 'Kancil' car park at the foot of Penang Hill, the state's so-called 'free' WiFi project, illegal telecommunication towers (telcos) and traffic congestion.

To answer the allegations on sPICE, the DAP has prepared flyers - print and electronic - to "educate" the people on the benefits of the project, which Ng described as a "win-win-win-win" situation for the investor, state government, Penangites and the environment.

The party has also prepared another set of flyers comparing the benefits of sPICE with the Jelutong Expressway built under the BN state government.

State executive councillor Chow Kon Yeow (left) had accused Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon of giving the developer concession rights, including rights to reclaim land, cash payment for land acquisition and relocation of squatters, and waiver on development charges that are now worth RM5 billion or more.

Koh had refuted Chow's allegation, saying that Chow's claims were "misleading and ridiculous".

"The comparison will show you who sold out or guards the interests of Penangites," Ng said, displaying the colourful but yet to be distributed flyers that will hit the streets next week.

'Finding fish in own urine'

On the other charges raised by Gerakan - illegal telecommunication towers - Penang Island municipal councillor Harbinder Singh said before Pakatan took over the government, there were 849 such structures.

"At the end of last year, we reduced the number by 10 percent. We are gradually reducing more," Harbinder said.

As for claims that the state had misled the people by promoting free WiFi when it inked a deal with a private company - Redtone - for RM8.5 million for 750 free hotspots without an open tender, Ng said no other company was willing to come forward to provide the same deal.

"We had even thrown Gerakan a challenge to recommend a company that can provide us the same deal but no one came... if this is a good business, surely they would have come," he added.

As for the laughable "Kancil" car park, Harbinder said Gerakan was wrong in claiming that the state government was responsible for its problems, which included safety measures and having parking bays not large enough for most vehicles.

"The MPPP has not issued an occupancy certificate for the car park yet and we are looking into the problems, how can we be blamed when we have not yet approved its usage?" he queried.

'Gerakan must know what it is talking about'

"Blaming us for these projects and giving us an F grade is akin to 'finding a fish in your own urine'," he added, quoting a popular Punjabi saying for those who blame others for the errors in their own backyard.

Seberang Jaya municipal councillor Soon Lip Chee said the state government continued to be bombarded with such "evaluation" because of the fast approaching 13th general election.

Soon urged the opposition to provide the correct information to the people, and to refrain from distributing "false" reports on the current situation in Penang.

"We welcome opposition parties in monitoring the state government... it is a good thing, but please do not mislead the people," he stressed.

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