

DAP disciplinary committee clears Ramasamy
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Penang DAP deputy chief P Ramasamy has been exonerated of accusations that he mastermind a demonstration against state party leaders last December.

Disciplinary committee chairperson Tan Kok Wai said "there is no direct evidence" linking Ramasamy to the incident, and hence the latter is cleared of the allegation.

Ramasamy (left) was accused of orchestrating the demonstration - outside the Pearl View Hotel during DAP's state convention in Penang on Dec 11 - against assemblypersons RSN Rayer (Seri Delima) and A Tanasekharan (Bagan Dalam)

"Ramasamy said that when he was seen speaking to the demonstrators later, he was trying to diffuse tension," Tan told reporters at the DAP headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

The squabble unfolded when Rayer and Tanasekharan became entangled in a spat between DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh and Ramasamy.

Karpal and Ramasamy crossed swords after the latter said that there should not be any "godfathers" in the party, following Karpal's statement that only the DAP's top leadership could appoint election candidates.

Karpal then shot back saying that there should not be "warlords" in the party as well after which Ramasamy said the entire tiff was a result of his statement being misquoted by Tamil-language newspaper Makkal Osai.

The daily then published a retraction and apologised for the mistake after which a high-powered committee was set up to resolve the internal crisis declared the "godfather-warlord" war over.

Rayer, Tanasekharan and 31 others had lodged the complaint taking Ramasamy to task based on the "belief" the latter was fraternising the demonstrators.

Ramasamy, however, in giving evidence to the disciplinary committee last month, said that he talked and dined with the protesters to "calm them down" and "advised them to leave".

The admission was corroborated with testimonies given by Sungkai assemblyperson A Sivanesan and another DAP member Lai Kok Peng, who said that Ramasamy had asked them to speak to the demonstrators to convince them to disperse.

"The fact that Ramasamy talked and shook hands with demonstrators during the lunch break of the state convention and was spotted dining at a restaurant with them after the convention are mere circumstantial evidence which is weak and far from being able of holding Ramasamy liable for any disciplinary wrong," said Tan (above).

"We are satisfied that Ramasamy's intention in associating with the demonstrators on that day was to pacify them and advise them against the demonstration," he said.

On the complaint lodged against the deputy chief minister II for going against the gag order issued prior to "godfather-warlord" controversy, the committee decided to not pursue the matter as Ramasamy has initiated legal action.

The Star in an article on Dec 23 reported that Ramasamy had allegedly said that there was a plot to oust him because he did not heed requests for projects and favours from the party grassroots.

“They are now conspiring to invoke a grand design to oust me,” Ramasamy was quoted as saying, which fuelled further discontentment between him and Karpal.

However, Ramasamy denied having said anything of that nature, adding that the report was “baseless and frivolous” and is suing the English-language newspaper for RM10 million.

“We are of the opinion that Ramasamy had done sufficiently to defend himself in this matter.

Six from Bentayan branch suspended

“His denial towards the statement made by The Star was not only by way of an open statement but he furthered his stance by commencing legal action in court which will expose all his statements under stringent scrutiny of the law,” said Tan adding that it was “not prudent” to discuss the issue any longer.

On another matter, Tan announced that the committee has suspended six party members for protesting against Johor DAP chief Dr Boo Cheng Hau in Muar, December last year.

They were unhappy that Boo had planned to field his own candidate to contest the Bentayan state seat.

Former Bentayan branch deputy chairperson Lim Kem Wat and ex-treasurer Khoo Ah Huat were suspended for three years for the repeated offence, while four others - Tay Kee Yan, Gwee Suh Mei, Stephen Lim Yong How and Teo Choon Sieng - were suspended for two years.

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