

**Guan Eng to sue Penang Umno Youth, Utusan
MalaysiaKini.com
March 28, 2012
By Susan Loone**

The Penang chief minister is again on the warpath with Umno and its Malay-language daily Utusan Malaysia, this time intending to take legal action for alleged slander involving a religious matter.

NONESpeaking to the media, Lim Guan Eng referred to claims that the disputed sale of land in Bayan Mutiara may affect the construction of a mosque for which a plot has been reserved in the area.

He set his sights on state Umno Youth chief Shaik Hussein Mydin, saying he has been "playing with religious sentiments" to slander the Penang government.

Lim said he had not paid attention to Shaik Hussein's previous comments, but "this time, his slander is related to a religious issue and this was reportedly openly by Utusan Malaysia".

"I have asked my lawyer to look into the matter. This is a serious issue. He (Shaik Hussein) lied a lot earlier, but I didn't take any notice. He lies without any facts," Lim said.

"I do not want to take legal action against him. But I do not have a choice. Let the truth be exposed in court."

NONELast week, Utusan had quoted Shaik Hussein (right) as saying that Lim has no right to touch Muslim property, as this is a 'dangerous act' that could ignite anger among Muslims.

A report headlined 'Guan Eng biadab tergamak jual tapak masjid' accused Lim of being arrogant and rude for selling the land set aside for a mosque, which had been approved under the original Bayan Mutiara development plan.

The original plan, according to Shaik Hussein, had been approved the Penang Municipal Council on Oct 30, 2006.

"That plot was given to the Penang Islamic Affairs Council and gazetted under the council. We urge Lim to return the plot to the council," he had said in a statement.

He also told PAS leaders to advise Lim about the difference between the mosque and surau, as it is understood that the developer will only provide the latter.

The Bayan Mutiara issue was highlighted when the state sold 41.6 hectares of land to Ivory Properties Group Bhd for RM1.2 billion.

'Why I'm going to court'

Penang Umno has been taunting the chief minister over the deal, which it claimed was not conducted via an open tender - an accusation that Lim has rebutted.

He pointed out that his statements to clarify issues usually do not see print in the Malay newspapers or, if published, would likely be "twisted".

azlanFor this reason, he said it would be best to reveal information via a legal suit in court.

"When we say something positive, it is never published in the Malay newspapers. When it is something negative, it would come out on the front page. It is really a waste in time, so we will (go) to court," he said.

He reminded Utusan that it had lost a defamation suit he initiated after being called a 'racist' who had marginalised the Malays.

The Penang High Court had, in January, found the publisher guilty and ordered damages of RM200,000 to be paid to Lim.

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