

Guan Eng in suing mode again...

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MalaysiaKini.com

May 04, 2012

Just one day following World Press Freedom Day, another lawsuit involving Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and two mainstream newspapers seems imminent.

Lim said he is initiating legal action against Malay rights pressure group Perkasa, New Straits Times Press and Utusan Melayu (Bhd) for the "false report" of a dinner with senior Singapore PAP leaders where national secrets had allegedly been disclosed.

He added that New Sunday Times, Minggu Malaysia and Berita Minggu, which carried the report on Oct 2 last year, had apologised to businessmen Mohamed Azman Yahya and Kalimullah Hassan, who were mentioned in the article.

However, Lim said the newspapers had not done the same for him, while they had carried allegations by Perkasa that he, together with the duo, had attended the dinner and allegedly disclosed national secrets.

"No attempt was made by these newspapers to clarify the allegation by contacting the parties alleged to have been involved," Lim said.

"For political reasons, they have refused, in spite of my lawyers' requests, to pay any damages or to publish any clarification or apology concerning the allegations against me," he added.

Lim said he does not have the resources and ability to file a court defamation action every time the Umno-linked media allegedly defamed him.

Even without their news coverage, he added, the NST has continued to run defamatory articles against him.

"Imagine how many more court actions I would have to file if they were invited to run riot with lies at my news conferences," he quipped.

Taking a leaf from Xenophon

Lim, who is DAP secretary-general, is taking a leaf from the recent case of the New Straits Times' report which had depicted Australian Senator Nick Xenophon as "anti-Islam".

NONENST has since apologised and retracted the report, but this has not deterred Lim from saying that his no-invitation policy to Umno-linked press like NST and Utusan Malaysia is justified.

Yesterday, he had explained his action at length, describing it as "purely an act of self-defence against accomplished liars" as the newspapers, he added, had never given him the right of reply, a basic principle of journalistic ethics.

Lim had previously sued Utusan for accusing him of being "racist and anti-Malay", where the Penang High Court had ordered the newspaper to compensate him with RM200,000 in damages.

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