

**Will 'Penang free port' be owned by Syed Mokhtar?**  
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Responding to BN's promise to revive Penang's free port status if it recaptures the state, a DAP parliamentarian urged new BN chief Teng Chang Yeow to clarify whether the proposed free port will fall into the hands of tycoon Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary.

“Before Teng talks about making Penang island a free port again, I would like him to state whether he agrees that Penang port should remain in public hands or to allow it to be privatised to Syed Mokhtar,” said Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong (right) in a statement.

Liew claimed that the politically connected businessman intends to turn Penang port into a mere feeder port for his other ports in Johor, which would effectively spell the end of Penang port.

On Sunday, Teng had unveiled a massive social economic transformation plan to recapture the state from Pakatan Rakyat, including the proposal to revive Penang's free port status.

He said the free port project remains a proposal and if approved by the federal government, it will be implemented only if the coalition recaptures Penang.

teng chang yeow gerakan secretary generalIn the statement issued today, Liew welcomed Teng's (left) attempt to move away from noisy racial commotion courtesy of Umno and its outsourced associates such as Perkasa through promoting discussion on policies.

However, he wanted Teng and BN to commit to the basic principle that pledges made on behalf of the federal government should be implemented regardless of whether BN wins the state government or not.

“The people of Penang pay taxes to the federal government and hence are entitled to allocations from the federal government,” he said.

'Explain status of old pledges'

He then reminded Teng and Penang BN to first explain the status of old pledges and “gifts” made earlier by the federal government, namely the second bridge; monorail and outer ring road announced by former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in 2006; as well as the 200 new buses to Penang promised by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak in 2010.

“We will not enter into the debate about whether monorail or an outer ring road are the best solutions to Penang’s transportation woes, but the people of Penang deserve an answer on the status of those ‘gifts’ in order to be sure that the new pledges would be honoured.”

On the promise to increase Rapid Penang’s buses from 350 to 550, Liew claimed that nothing has happened to date.

“This is the only promise made by the federal government to Penang since the general election of 2008 and it does not cost more than RM100 million. Yet even such a small pledge was not honoured. Can BN be trusted for its bigger promises?”

It was reported in March that the cabinet has approved the sale of Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB), which manages the Penang port, to Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), a company owned by Syed Mokhtar to run the Tanjung Pelepas port in Johor.

However, no official announcement has been made to date.