

Will a live telecast push Najib-Anwar debate?
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By Nicholas Wong

DAP Youth is suspicious that pressure from the top may be behind the decision not to broadcast live the Chua Soi Lek-Lim Guan Eng debate.

"It is because of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's statement that debates are not our political culture?"

"Will this (live broadcast) add more pressure for an Anwar-Najib debate?" DAP Youth chief Anthony Loke raised at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

Loke said the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute's (Asli) decision to air the debate at 11pm on Sunday in order to reach a wider audience "holds no water".

It would mean the broadcast will end late, at 1am, which makes no sense as viewers would have to get up early to go to work the next day, he said.

Loke hopes there still is time for the organisers to change their minds and have the event telecast live.

He also wants the mainstream TV stations such as TV3 to pick up the programme and broadcast it live as well, for the sake of a larger audience.

Commercially, everybody would want to air the debate as the previous one drew more than one million viewers, he said.

Despite this, Loke added, he was informed that TV stations under the Media Prima group did not show interest in telecasting the debate when approached by the organisers.

"We are pretty sure it will be an interesting debate, especially after the exchanges over the past few days," he said, referring to the back-and-forth remarks between Chua and Lim.

The two have been trading barbs over allegations of an extramarital affair between Lim and a former staff member of his office.

Malacca state assemblyperson Gan Tian Loo, who is also Malacca MCA chief, had called on DAP's Betty Chew to answer questions related to the former staff of the office of Lim, who is Chew's husband and Penang chief minister.

However, Loke is confident that Lim would not let the issue run into the debate, and would instead focus on policies and facts.

"I do not know about Chua Soi Lek, but I remind him that all Malaysians will be watching this debate," he added.

Loke also condemned Gan for "misusing" state assembly immunity in order to lob allegations at the Kota Laksamana assemblyperson.

He backed Lim's challenge to Gan to repeat his statements outside the state assembly, so

the matter could be "proven in court".

'MCA's concerted effort to distract voters'

"They stoop so low as to launch such an attack in the state assembly," he said, calling it "political desperation and political bankruptcy".

He also agreed with Chua's statement that Lim was "not like me (Chua)", for Lim would not be "caught with his pants down".

"Chua seems to be very proud of his scandal, claiming he has 'political moral' in the matter," Loke said.

The allegations against Lim, along with the supposed RM1 billion Talam scandal, are part of MCA's concerted effort to distract voters from the Kuantan Chinese independent high school issue, he added.

"I am asking MCA: it is because you failed to deliver on your promise to announce a decision on the Kuantan Chinese independent high school?" he queried, adding that MCA needed to distract the Chinese community from the hotly-debated issue.

The conspiracy was evident when several media outlets were allowed into the Malacca state assembly to record Gan's attack, he charged.

"It is very unusual, even in Parliament, for the media to be allowed in to take pictures," Loke said, noting that outsiders were only allowed into the public gallery.

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