

BN Youth: Penang gov't a broker for land sales?

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By Low Chia Ming

Penang BN Youth has taken its 'land sale' attacks on the Penang government one step further to reveal that the Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) has sold four parcels of land belonging to the state since Pakatan Rakyat took over in 2008.

State BN Youth chief Oh Tong Keong urged the state government to explain in detail the number of plots of state land it has sold, and how many parcels are yet to be sold.

Oh said the state merely owns 12 percent of the land in Penang, and there was concern that not many plots were now available for 'purposeful development'.

If the state government declined to reveal the information, it would clearly show that it was trying to "cover-up" its operations, he said.

Oh claimed that so far nine pre-war houses along Jalan Magazine, five buildings on Jalan Kimberly and another along Lorong Hutton - all owned by the Penang Municipal Council - have been sold off to private companies.

"Other than making money, the state government will quickly announce that it has made a profit instead of losses in its financial report," he said.

"However, this tactic will not benefit the people of Penang," Oh told a press conference yesterday.

"Penangites have to know the true face of the state government and be cautious of their own properties," Oh, who is also state Gerakan Youth chief, warned.

'CM actively selling state land'

The wing has been "exposing" how the administration under Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has been disposing of state land, such as plots along Jalan Taman Free School, a 1.1-acre plot in Taman Manggis (Jalan Zainal Abidin) and on Jalan CY Choy.

According to Oh, the previous BN administration had left acres of reserve land, commercial and residential buildings before Pakatan Rakyat took over the state.

However, instead of using the resources to build affordable homes, the DAP-led government has been acting like a 'yuppie' (a carefree youth with wealthy parents), Oh lamented.

"They have been selling off state land non-stop and this amounts to selling the interests of Penangites."

Oh also said that his team would make further exposes of sales that also involve "a big piece of land".

He urged Pakatan assemblypersons "to speak up against such policies if they have the conscience".

Oh took a swipe at Lim, calling him a 'foreigner' in Penang, saying he was from Malacca and not aware of how valuable land was in Penang.

"Lim keeps using this tactic (of selling land) to show that our state has a surplus budget. But if this is the way to do it, then it would be rather easier than being a chief minister," quipped Oh.

Meanwhile, state Gerakan Youth deputy chief, H'ng Khoon Leng said a piece of state land in Lengkok Ariff was sold to a buyer from Bagan , which is Lim's parliamentary constituency.

H'ng said the same buyer had also purchased a plot of land along Jalan Taman Free School.

He lamented the online tender record for the land sale was not available and therefore he was uncertain if it had been sold via an open tender.

"The Penang Municipal Council seems not to have published its annual reports for the past few years. I tried to get it from its public relations department, but up to now, there has been no reply," H'ng said.

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