

## **1Malaysia-Penang Welfare denies being funded by BN**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**April 10, 2013**

**By Susan Loone**

Fending off increasing suspicion of being the funder behind BN's alleged money politics, the 1Malaysia-Penang Welfare club has publicly denied that its financial resources were in any way related to the government or political parties.

The club's president, Geh Choh Hun, said that the organisation does not receive any funding from the federal or state governments or any political parties.

"We are supported by a range of generous contributors who share our vision. Our integrity ensures that our supporters are protected by strict confidentiality provisions," said Geh, in a press conference in Penang today.

Accompanying him was young billionaire Low Taek Jho (right) - who is popularly known as Jho Low - which some quarters believe is the personality providing the funds for the BN's election campaign, although the latter has denied it.

The club had organised a huge dinner on Monday attended by 5,000 people at the Han Chiang College field, handing out donations amounting to RM2 million to three media associations and other NGOs.

The three journalists' organisations - including a martial arts association - each received RM50,000, while other NGOs had been given RM5,000 each.

The 1Malaysia NGO had come under the spotlight when several free dinners were held in the Pulau Tikus constituency starting about three weeks ago.

DAP has been claiming that these free dinners - where donations and gifts were distributed - are an attempt to draw votes for BN candidates in the coming general election.

Caretaker Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (left) has alleged that huge sums of money are being used for this purpose, saying that such practices of "money politics" are bound to affect the polls' results, thus causing Pakatan Rakyat to lose Penang.

Yesterday, Pulau Tikus incumbent Koay Teng Hai claimed that the NGO has organised a lucky draw competition around the area, offering RM500 worth of prizes for every 40 winners in the 40 Penang state constituencies.

Geh admitted that this was the only lucky draw organised by the club, saying that the funds for the event is being sponsored by several corporations.

Geh added that to achieve its aims, the Club participates in direct contributions to charity organisations and NGOs.

'A unity, peace and harmony initiative'

He claimed that the club works closely with these organisations to raise funds while organising dinner events which supports local businesses.

"We encourage Malaysians from all walks of life to come together to get to know each other, as part of a unity, peace and harmony initiative," he stressed.

"(We organise) entertainment, lucky draws, and other activities with the objectives of bringing happiness, festivities for family and friends to get together, to benefit the needy population while promoting 1Malaysia-Penang Welfare's campaign with various branded products to support 1Malaysia for peace and prosperity," he added.

Geh said the NGO also encourages more affluent Penangites who had won prizes in the lucky draw to contribute these products or funds back to the society in the form of charity to support the cause of improving the people's well-being.

Meanwhile, the club is planning a large-scale concert involving 10 artistes on April 20 at the Han Chiang College field.

So far, six performers - Swizz Beatz, Redfoo, Grasshopper, Eric Woo, George Lam and Ning Baizura - have confirmed their participation, said Geh.

He added that the concert will still go on although it falls on nomination day, adding that "we are non-political".

"The international performers have agreed to perform for free and we have corporations to sponsor our local artistes and pay for other expenses.

"The audience need only pay a minimal sum of RM1 as the entrance fee, and this amount will be donated to charity," he said.

Geh (right) noted that the club has submitted all its application to ensure the concern is a success, adding that the field can accommodate 60,000 (with tables) and up to 100,000 people.

The NGO's president had made the comments at a luncheon attended by about 50 people, after presenting RM100,000 to the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce's Young Entrepreneurs.

