

Karpal: DAP independents have 24 hours to apologise

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By Susan Loone

DAP will not tolerate any act of indiscipline from its members who are standing as independents after not being fielded as candidates in the coming general election.

DAP chairperson Karpal Singh said he was giving incumbents Teratai assemblyperson Jenice Lee and Kota Melaka MP Sim Tong Him 24 hours to publicly apologise and withdraw their Independent candidacy or face expulsion from the party.

"This is a serious act of indiscipline. It is unacceptable, inexcusable and intolerable," Karpal told a press conference in Penang today.

"Their act amounts to sabotaging chances of DAP candidates, and is a very serious act of indiscipline," he added.

Karpal (above) said action would also be taken against party supporters of the two candidates.

Yesterday both Lee and Sim sprang a surprise on their party when they filed their nominations papers to contest as Independents against the party's own candidates.

Lee is defending her state seat while Sim (left), fielded as DAP's candidate for the Kota Melaka parliamentary seat, is also contesting as an Independent for the Kota Laksamana state seat.

Karpal said the duo should publicly apologise for their actions, withdraw their candidacy and ask their constituents not to vote for them as independents.

"I won't mince my words. DAP would rather lose a seat than tolerate acts of indiscipline," said the Bukit Gelugor candidate.

"Being apologetic is not enough. They need to make a public statement".

'Members feel cheated by Sim'

Meanwhile party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng concurred that Sim should withdraw his independent candidacy within 24 hours or "bear full responsibility for BN winning" his two seats.

Lim said Sim's move to run as an independent candidate was dishonest as he had not informed the party earlier.

He said many party members felt offended that Sim had "cheated" the party by submitting his independent candidacy secretly, while taking the party's letter of authorisation for the parliamentary seat.

"I would not have signed the letter of authorisation as DAP secretary-general appointing Sim as the candidate to contest as Kota Melaka parliamentary candidate," Lim said in a statement today.

He added that Sim's move has now put party members in a dilemma on who to vote for in the Kota Laksamana state seat.

It has also damaged DAP's credibility and chances in the two seats, he said.

"Several of my friends in Malacca, especially the Malays, are wondering whether Sim has been bought over and told me DAP will not get the Malay votes in Kota Melaka if Sim did not prove his public integrity.

"Malay voters will flock back to BN if they think that the Pakatan candidate has been compromised," said Lim.

Sim getting big headed?

The incumbent Penang CM also ticked Sim off for the latter's campaign, call 'Sim = DAP and DAP = Sim'.

"I wish to warn Sim that no one person is bigger than the party. Even I as DAP secretary-general have never said that Lim Guan Eng = DAP and DAP = Lim Guan Eng."

Adding that none of the party leaders had been informed of Sim's intention, his move was bad timing considering DAP's troubles against the ruling party.

"The party feels sad that at a time when every leader is fighting hard against BN's dirty tactics to deny DAP the use of the Rocket symbol, Sim has taken the decision to fight against his own party symbol," said Lim.

Meanwhile DAP's Ayer Keroh state candidate Khoo Poay Tiong today also called for

Sim to back down on Kota Laksamana so as to concentrate on winning his Kota Melaka seat.

Khoo in a statement today called on Sim to focus his efforts on the party and coalition's goal of changing the government in order to take care of the people's interests.

"This election is the best chance for the people to change the government. The people should not let this golden opportunity go to waste," he said.

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