

Guan Eng: I never promised to probe 'racist' doctors

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Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng says he never promised - verbally or in writing - to investigate the racist doctors claim, for he has no power to do so as the hospitals are under federal government jurisdiction.

Lim expressed shock over being accused of having said that he had "promised verbally or in writing" to investigate the serious allegations of "racist doctors" in Penang.

NONELim said the allegation by Deputy Health Minister Hilmi Yahya (left) was "completely untrue" as he does not have such power to investigate.

"Hilmi is clearly not fit to be deputy health minister if he does not know that government hospitals come under the purview and exclusive jurisdiction of his ministry and federal government, not the state," Lim said in a statement issued today.

"Clearly Hilmi is trying to run away and hide from responsibility by passing the buck to the state government that no action will be taken until we send in the report to the Health Ministry," Lim added.

"What report is there for the state government to send when there is no such verbal promise by me? The state government has no authority to conduct investigations over doctors in government hospitals," Lim said.

Lim asked if this was the way out for the Health Ministry not to investigate on the false premise that no report has been received from the state government.

State willing to investigate if...

He said the state government was willing to investigate if Hilmi was willing to hand over full authority over government hospitals in Penang to the state government.

Hilmi was reported by national news agency Bernama as saying yesterday that the Health Ministry was awaiting for the investigation report on the 'racist doctors' from the Penang government as "verbally promised" by its chief minister.

Hilmi said the ministry would decide on its next course of action only after receiving

the state government's report.

NONEThe allegations were first raised in the state assembly on July 3 by Umno Pinang Tunggul assemblyperson Roslan Saidin (left), who claimed that three Chinese Malaysian doctors in the Kepala Batas and Seberang Jaya hospitals practised racism by refusing to treat Malay patients.

To back his claims, Roslan produced four victims to shared their experiences with their doctors.

However, his colleague, state opposition leader and Teluk Ayer Tawar assemblyperson Jahara Hamid, said their allegations highlighted the delivery system of the hospitals, ethics and professionalism of doctors instead of racism.

Roslan had tried to tie the incidents to dwindling support from the community for the BN in the 13th general election on May 5, which Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak dubbed as the "Chinese tsunami".

Lim said he has extended an invitation to Hilmi to visit his office in Komtar on Wednesday, July 31, to provide proof of his (Lim's) verbal promise to investigate the allegations of 'racist doctors'.

He added that a letter was also sent to Health Minister Dr S Subramaniam two weeks ago, requesting that Subramaniam verifies the allegations made by Roslan.

Lim reiterated that if the incidents were true, action should be taken against the doctors.

"However, if untrue, Roslan must publicly apologise for making such unfounded allegations that have smeared the reputation and image of all doctors in Malaysia," Lim added.

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