

Penang DAP to go after Chang over 'tokong' remark

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By Susan Loone

Penang DAP has given Gerakan acting president Chang Ko Youn 48 hours to retract his "baseless" claims that Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has policies that favour developers.

"Be a gentleman and withdraw your statement or face further action," the state DAP legal advisor RSN Rayer told Chang during a press conference in Island Park today.

NONERayer said attacking the chief minister is akin to attacking the entire state government.

"Rest assured that for any malicious statement, there will be a response or legal action, the lies has gone on for too long," he added.

When asked if this would justify Chang's remark that Lim was prone to suing his critics, Rayer said "this is the way to clear our reputation".

He added that if Chang fails to retract his statement, Rayer would consult Lim and DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh for "further instructions" on how to proceed with the matter.

CM had given developers tough time

Rayer was referring to Chang's speech yesterday at the state Gerakan delegates conference, where he hit out at Lim, labelling him a "Tokong (deity) that Penangites felt could do no wrong".

Chang also defended outgoing Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon by saying that the latter had steadfastly abided by the rules and made developers unhappy during his tenure as Penang chief minister.

Rayer said it was untrue that Lim was a dictator who made decisions without consulting his state exco or state development committee members.

"It is apparent that Chang is suffering from amnesia because he has forgotten that Koh Tsu Koon was a puppet (former) CM under the Umno dominated state government (prior to 2008)," he said.

Rayer cited how Koh had failed to help the people of Kampung Buah Pala, who faced eviction by developers. He said it was Lim who helped the residents obtain a double-storey terrace houses, which are worth RM850,000 each now, as compensation.

He said that the developers involved in illegal land clearing in Bukit Relau were fined RM30,000 in court and the state government had appealed for a higher sentence.

He said that these were just two examples from his constituency, Seri Delima, alone.

New traffic system will help

On traffic problems raised by Chang, Rayer said that the state's plan to build a undersea tunnel to the mainland and implement an integrated road system would help alleviate the problem.

"This is a long-term plan to reduce traffic congestion without involving state funds," he said.

"There are also short term plans like car free day on (first) Sunday (of the month along a section of the busy Beach Street), park and ride system which has definitely brought about significant drop in traffic congestion.

"Gerakan leaders did not have the intellectual capacity to think and implement these because they were too busy politicking," he said.

Rayer also questioned why Chang did not respond to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's recent exclusive incentives for the bumiputeras instead of attacking Lim.

In an immediate response, Chang said it was "typical of DAP to use legal suits to muzzle its opponents".

"Where is freedom of speech? They can say anything against us but we are not allowed to criticise them," he said when contacted.

"Is that the political culture DAP wants to promote? What kind of democracy is being promoted by DAP? If they want to sue, I will face them in court," he added.

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