

'Win against Utusan, lose Malay support'

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Winning defamation suits against Umno mouthpiece Utusan Malaysia has had the unintended effect of stirring up Malay sentiments against litigants from Pakatan Rakyat.

NONEDAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said this is due to misunderstanding among some quarters that Pakatan is "mistreating" the Malay language daily.

"We can only do our best... if you win, people are going to perceive that you're mistreating a Malay newspaper," Lim told a forum at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall yesterday.

Given this, Lim said, the only thing he could do in such cases was to explain the 'truth' of the matter.

"We have to let the people decide. You can lie for a moment, but not for your whole life. Readers will (eventually) know how to differentiate the good from the bad," he said.

He also claimed that Utusan could afford to pay substantial sums in damages after losing cases, and that court cases have failed to stop it from publishing defamatory reports.

"I've won several times, but they keep writing... what they have is money," he noted.

Former National Union of Journalists president Hata Wahari had previously claimed that Utusan editors are not afraid of losing such suits and are only interested in whether their reports achieve the desired effect.

NONEThe forum, themed 'What's next after 505?' was organised for Lim and former Bar Council president Yeo Yang Poh (right) to address issues relevant after the 13th general election.

Lim said voters should not to be upset by Pakatan's failure to capture Putrajaya, and urged them to reject the BN's electoral strategy that uses the mainstream media, government machinery, money and 'Mahathirism'.

He explained that 'Mahathirism' had nothing to do personally with Dr Mahathir Mohamad, but referred to extreme racial ideas that the former prime minister shares.

"The BN relies on inciting racial sentiment to hold the power," Lim added.

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