

Stand off at state assembly over memo
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Athi Veerangan

A state executive councillor and an opposition leader had an unpleasant stand off at Penang Legislative Assembly lobby during the handing over of a DAP-initiated memorandum on abandoned houses yesterday.

The confrontation triggered when Executive Councillor Syed Amerrudin Syed Ahmad refused to receive the memorandum and ticked off house buyers, who were affected by the abandoned Desa Aman housing project, for seeking DAP's help to overcome their predicament.

Penang DAP chairperson Chow Kon Yeow, who accompanied the house buyers, suddenly raised his voice and gave Syed Amerruddin an ultimatum to pick up the memorandum.

After initially refusing to pick it up, the executive councillor, who is in charge of the housing, culture, arts and heritage had no choice but to accept the memorandum, albeit under pressure.

Earlier, Penang DAP secretary Danny Law Heng Kiang led a peaceful demonstration outside the House during the assembly sitting to protest against the state government incompetence in reviving several abandoned housing projects.

About 100 affected house buyers joined the demonstration.

During a break, Law, accompanied by Tanjung member of Parliament Chow, led a group of house buyers to hand over the memorandum urging the state government to revive the projects, which would provide nearly 5,000 houses to Penang residents.

The stand off

However, Syed Amerrudin refused to receive it instantly and reproached the house buyers for seeking DAP's assistance to resolve their woes instead of contacting him on the matter.

"Why didn't you all lodge a complaint to me?" he asked the house buyers.

At this juncture, Chow intervened and gave an ultimatum to Amerrudin: "YB (Yang Berhormat), are you going to receive it or not?"

When the government man refused, the DAP strongman then raised his voice and repeated his ultimatum.

After hesitating initially, Amerrudin then reluctantly receive the memorandum from Law.

The house buyers then informed the executive councillor that they had already lodged an official complaint at the state housing department on the issue.

"But until today nothing has happened," they told him.

Chow later said that Amerrudin was wrong in refusing to accept the memorandum merely because the house buyers had sought his party's help.

"Its nothing wrong for the people to seek DAP's assistance. As a responsible YB (Amerrudin), he should receive it and resolve the issue," he told malaysiakini.

CM's empty promise

In the memorandum, the house buyers have called on the state government to revive abandoned housing projects in Penang.

The disgruntled house buyers were from 10 abandoned housing projects, including Taman Cemerlang in Bandar Baru Air Itam, Majestic Heights (Phase 2 and 3) in Paya Terubong, Fettes Villa in Tanjung Tokong, Taman Crystal in Bagan Jermal, Taman Desa Aman in Relau, Taman Penang Jaya in Bayan Baru and PPH Resort in Sungai Ara - all on the island.

On mainland, the affected projects are Taman Pekatra Indah in Simpang Empat, Taman Suria in Nibong Tebal and Taman Abdullah Fahim in the Prime Minister's Kepala Batas Parliamentary constituency.

Ironically, Taman Abdullah Fahim was named after Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's grandfather.

"The house buyers wanted to vent their frustration," said Law.

Amerrudin assured that he would personally look into all ways and means to revive the projects and provide houses for Penangites.

Fettes Villa House Buyers Action Committee chairman Tan Kim Cheng said the committee had met and made numerous pleas to the Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who is also the area state assemblyman, to revive the project.

"However, the Chief Minister's pledges to revive the project for the past 11 years have remained empty promises," he said.

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