

DAP chides Chua's negative portrayal of Muslim nations
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Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has today rubbished the views of MCA chief Dr Chua Soi Lek, who has portrayed Muslim countries as "poor, backward and corrupt".

Lim (right in photo) urged Chua to learn more about the history of Islamic civilisation, whose global empires had not only contributed breathtaking art and architecture, but also the introduction of numbers, algebra and astronomy.

national integrity conference anwar lim guan eng 070810 01 "Muslim countries are suffering from the same problem suffered by India and China previously.

"Only when India and China were free, independent and not dominated by imperialist powers, that they were able to realise their potential and take their place in the world stage as economic powers," he said at International Integrity Conference 2010 today in Penang.

"I believe that Muslim nations can also recapture their past glories if they were allowed to be similarly unshackled like India and China," he added.

Also present at the conference was Pakatan Rakyat leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Lim, who is DAP national secretary-general, said Muslim countries can excel if there was good governance just as Islam was a centre of learning, justice, and excellence under the rule of Umar Abdul Aziz.

"The choice is whether we follow the Umar Abdul Aziz's governing model of integrity and good governance or the alternative model of corruption and dictatorship," he added.

Middle-income trap

Lim was referring to Chua's comment yesterday at MCA's Annual Convention in Alor Star, Kedah (below) that both Umno and PAS used religion to strengthen their influence and win Malay support.

Chua said that when the two Malay-Muslim parties compete, the consequence was the implementation of non-progressive policies, which has resulted in the country falling into a middle-income trap over the past 10 years.

NONEHe added that Umno has become more conservative to compete with PAS in fishing for Malay votes.

Chua however stressed that he raised the issue to prod Chinese Malaysians into think twice about voting for PAS.

He said many in the Chinese community should do away with their belief that once the Islamic party is in government, the country will be free from corruption.

"Some of the most corrupt countries are Muslim majority," he told 300 participants at MCA's 33rd annual convention in Kedah.

Problem with Umno, not Islam

Meanwhile, Lim challenged Chua to pose serious questions on two major controversies - the 'Allah' row and sports betting - to MCA's political ally, Umno.

NONEHe urged Chua (right) not to 'miss the woods for the trees' and suggested that the MCA chief was deflecting attention from the real root of the problem - Umno.

"These issues appear to be not a problem with Muslim countries, but it is a problem with Umno. For example, sports betting is not allowed by some Islamic countries but it is allowed by Umno," said Lim sarcastically, when asked to elaborate his views about Chua's comments.

"The issue of (using the term) 'Allah' is not an issue with other Muslim countries, but it is somehow an issue here. Perhaps he is trying to distract attention that the real root of the problem is Umno. We (take issue) when he blames it on Muslim countries because I think it is wrong," he added.

NONEChua was in a tight spot recently when the party's central committee member Loh Seng Kok issued a statement urging Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to rescind the ban on use of the term 'Allah' by non-Muslims, after the latter blamed his predecessor for the controversy.

Loh was ticked off by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin for playing up the issue and accused the party of ganging up with the DAP, which Chua vehemently denied.

What resulted shortly after was a gag order on MCA to stop raising the issue, making it appear as if it had back-downed under Umno's pressure.

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