

'Penang CM bankrupt of ideas'
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Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng is planning to sue Malay language daily Utusan Malaysia for allegedly publishing 'slandorous news' about him allegedly prohibiting Malay traders from doing business at the Ramadan bazaar.

However, according to Komtar Merchants Association (KMA) vice-chairperson Mohamed Ghani Abdul Jiman, the CM is "bankrupt of ideas" after giving the impression that he (Ghani) was the one issuing false news.

Mohamed Ghani (right) said he, too, was said to have committed a breach of trust when he purportedly failed to pay the rental fees for the stalls in Komtar after collecting it from the traders.

"But after I revealed the various relevant documents showing that I was given late notice to make the payment, the CM has now turned his attention to the Malay paper," he added.

Mohamed Ghani said he had lodged a report over the documents on Wednesday at the Pattani Road police station.

He admitted that he has yet to pay any fees to the Penang Development Corporation (PDC), which manages Komtar, as he needs to go back to his committee to discuss the new procedures.

According to past procedures, he added, the traders paid the rental fees at the end of the month, and not at the beginning of the bazaar.

"We have to follow the KMA constitution. I have to go back to the members. I am not a company but a member of an association under the Registrar of Societies," he said.

"If the CM does not understand the constitution, please ask him to get someone to buy a copy of KMA's constitution or he can contact the ROS to explain to him what this is all about," he added sarcastically.

The Ramadan bazaar issue continues to hog local dailies with several sectors - from the CM's department, PDC, PKR, Umno and the KMA - sniping at one another over the fiasco.

In a press statement today, the CM's press secretary Cheong Yin Fan said that Lim's (right) lawyers at Karpal Singh & Co were planning to study the Malay daily's reports from Aug 7-11, which the latter considered to be "false news to incite racial sentiments".

The daily had allegedly reported that the CM has oppressed the Malay traders by prohibiting the bazaar which operates in Komtar yearly.

'Bazaar still in business'

But the bazaar continues to run its business, only the KMA, as coordinator, was prevented from setting up its members' stalls as they had not paid the necessary rental fees to the PDC, said Cheong.

"How can they set up stalls when KMA has not paid the rental fees? What is even worse is

that the KMA, which coordinates the stalls, has collected the fees from the traders but has not remitted it to the PDC until today," she said.

"In order to hide the failure of the KMA to remit the collected fees, a racial issue was instead highlighted to make it seem that Malay traders were oppressed for not being allowed to operate at the bazaar," she added.

"Until today, not even a cent has been paid to the PDC," she stressed.

NONELim said this was not the first time that Utusan Malaysia had allegedly "lied and lied completely that the CM has oppressed the Malays".

For example, Utusan Malaysia continues to purportedly "publish false news" that the Muslim celebration Maulud Nabi had been prohibited although it had been organised as usual and with more fervor since Pakatan Rakyat took over the state government post-March 8.

"At first, the CM did not wish to take legal action because he felt that this is politics of hate and violence from those who are anti-PR," she said.

"However, since it is still continuing, he is forced to take this action to expose to the public the lies and bad intentions of Utusan Malaysia," she added.

Cheong said the CM was willing to accept this challenge with patience and confidence that it is a test from God to fight against slander and lies.

This is because the state government was confident that the rakyat was able to differentiate between right and wrong.

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