

Has letterheads issue affected support for DAP?

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Political analysts are in two minds over whether the recent "hoo-ha" over the misuse of DAP letterheads in Selangor will have any bearing on the people's support for the party, one of three which make up the opposition Pakatan Rakyat pact.

sivamurugan pandian saiful bukhari sodomy allegations penang 020708 02One of them, Sivamurugan Pandian (right), believes that "somehow, the issue has tarnished the party's image" but another, James Chin, does not think the party has been affected in any way.

The "hoo-ha" was over the misuse of DAP letterheads belonging to Selangor state executive councillor Ronnie Liu as letters of support by the now-sacked Klang municipal councillor Tee Boon Hock.

Tee was also sacked from the party but Liu was severely reprimanded by the DAP disciplinary committee for not managing his office in accordance with public expectations.

NONThe committee also strongly advised Selangor assembly speaker Teng Chang Khim (left) to be careful with his statements or tweets after he had sent the tweet "OMG, the real culprit freed" following the party's sacking of Tee.

Some people may regard the committee's decisions as right to contain the fallout, if there is any, following the letterheads "fiasco".

Others may think that the party will now have to contend with integrity problems in its own house as it tries to meet the high expectations of its supporters.

Explaining his view, Sivamurugan said that before 2008, the people were not bothered with what was happening in the DAP.

"They were not concerned that much then, but now the people are watching closely as they will be cautious with the vote they are going to cast in the next general election," he said.

He said the party had been promoting competency, accountability and transparency (CAT) as its policy in the running of a government, as it is doing so in Penang which it has been helming since the 2008 general election.

NONESivamurugan said the DAP cannot deny there was "no crack, no crook or no faction" in the party.

"It is going to be an issue now how the DAP can condone this kind of attitude when you are preaching CAT," he said.

Chin (left), on the other hand, believed that Tee's case would have no bearing whatsoever on the party's hardcore supporters.

Some party insiders revealed that the matter was discussed at length during the party's central executive committee (CEC) meeting on Thursday night, which was attended by all the CEC members, except Teng.

In fact, Liu was asked to leave the meeting when the matter was brought up for discussion

as each of the members expressed their opinion on the matter, a leader said.

Others felt that the disciplinary committee's decision was akin to Liu (right) receiving a "yellow card" and Teng basically being given a "verbal" warning in a football match.

But at the same time, some raised questions over whether the disciplinary committee's decisions were enough to repair the damage which they felt had been done.

One source said disciplinary committee chairperson and member of parliament for Cheras Tan Kok Wai had explained in detail how the committee came to the conclusion to give Liu a severe reprimand as there was no evidence to back the sacked Tee's allegation that Liu had knowledge of the support letters that were issued.

This has prompted some senior party leaders to ask the disciplinary committee to enhance the punishment, saying the whole episode had raised doubts on the party and there was a need for the party "to repair its image".

Many spoke on the issue, some even suggesting that Liu should step down voluntary as an exco member, but this was opposed by other leaders as they argued that the punishment could not be enhanced as there was no provision for that," said a source.

The CEC has deferred its decision on the appeal by Tee, who is seeking to nullify the disciplinary committee's decision to sack him.

Party secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (right) said the CEC needed time to consult the Selangor government first before arriving at a decision.

He had said that Tee was apparently sacked by the state government for another reason. "So, we need to clarify with them first," he had said.

Disciplinary committee chairman Tan, when announcing the committee's decisions Wednesday, had said that "this episode has damaged the party's image".

But has this affected the people's support for the party? Will it have to be left for time to tell? Perhaps.

- Bernama

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