

**Anwar defends Guan Eng over sermon row**  
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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim said there was no truth to allegations that Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng had engineered the removal of the King's name from the Friday prayers at several state mosques.

"I have personally monitored the situation and read the text of the sermon which were distributed and (spoken to) my friends in Penang, and it is found that there is no truth to the allegations," said Anwar in a statement today.

Anwar (right) said that the allegations were slander and reflects increasingly desperate attempts by the ruling party Umno to maintain its grip on power.

He blamed Umno leaders for again utilising party-owned newspaper Utusan Malaysia for stoking racial tensions and chastised its president Najib Abdul Razak for ignoring the wishes of the public for peace and harmony.

"We are certain that Umno leaders will not stop here. They will come out with more lies to cause disunity amongst the public because they realise that the public are united in wanting change and justice.

Yesterday, Penang Umno chief Ahmad Zahid Hamidi claimed that Guan Eng had swapped the King's name with his own in the Friday sermon last week in several of the state's mosques.

Zahid said that no police reports were lodged but insists that there was ample evidence to back his claims.

Deputy Premier Muhyiddin Yassin had urged the authorities to probe the allegations while Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin has labelled Guan Eng "power crazy" and was attempting to "glorify" himself by using the mosques.

Kit Siang: Apologise now

In a related development, DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang expressed outrage over the Utusan Malaysia article, claiming that the newspaper was working against the federal government theme for National Day.

Kit Siang said that while the theme - 1Malaysia: Transforming the nation - was an attempt to bring together the various ethnic groups, Utusan Malaysia's front page report on Guan Eng was an attempt to sow religious discord.

Describing the article as the "most irresponsible act in the history of Malaysian journalism", Kit Siang said that both the newspaper and Zahid must apologise.

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