

Teng: Guan Eng pulling wool over Penangite's eyes
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Penang Gerakan chief Teng Hock Nan is not sparing his fury at Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (below) for rejecting the opposition party's 'true sincerity' in wanting to help improve the economic situation of the state.

NONETeng said Lim's recent rejection of Gerakan's offer of help but acceptance of the party's national vice-chairperson Mah Siew Kong, was "arrogant, mischievous and uncalled for".

Mah is Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) chairperson.

"I made the statement on behalf of Gerakan, not myself, in true sincerity as a Penangite with all our heart and soul; we always want to put state interest above everything else," said Teng at a press conference in Penang today.

"We think that the CM should not be so arrogant and reject us in the media; other parties try to play a part in improving the state economy; whether the CM likes it or not, Gerakan is here ," he added.

"No one should doubt our sincerity," he stressed.

'Gerakan still around'

Teng (below) said that Gerakan still had its political base in Penang, and through its channels, will try to increase the quality of life of Penangites.

NONEHe added that he has spoken to Mah, who has agreed to make his first official visit to Penang soon to see how Matrade can improve the economy of the state by increasing its foreign direct investments.

Yesterday, Lim said he rejected Teng's offer because of the Gerakan leader's "unimpressive" track record in attracting FDI, but added that he welcomed Mah's support.

The CM also accused Teng of incurring a RM230 million loss in the Seberang Prai municipal council while the latter was in power, that has neither been accounted for nor clarified.

In his response, Teng said what Lim called losses was money spent to build several "necessary" infrastructure projects for the people.

He said one such project was the Perda (Penang Development Authority) building that currently houses the MPSP mainland offices.

Teng added that parts of it were also spent to build markets in Berapit, Kota Permai, Sungai Bakap, Kepala Batas, Tasek Gelugor and Valdor in Nibong Tebal.

"These markets are for the convenience of traders, hawkers and housewives to do their daily shopping," he said.

He added to the list the construction of sport complexes, food courts and community halls

for youth and senior citizens, especially the poorer segment of society, in Butterworth, Kepala Batas and Bukit Mertajam.

'Don't take all the credit'

Teng was also upset that Lim continues to use the word 'previously' when commenting on the state's coffers, saying it suggested that money had been squandered off by the previous BN government when it ruled Penang before March 2008.

NONE"During our time, there were more infrastructures done and we were planning to ask the federal government to fund the MPSP projects in case there was a shortage of reserves," he said.

He then questioned Lim about mega-projects under the latter's leadership such as the building of the controversial RM50 million Penang International Convention Centre (PICC) under Penang municipal council (MPPP) funding.

"If Lim does not agree to building infrastructure projects for the people, then how can he justify the building of PICC which is not beneficial for the public, especially by the poor and the ordinary folks on the street?" he asked.

"Until now, we also do not know if the process of building the PICC is transparent or not; we ask a lot of questions but no answers are forthcoming from him," he said.

Teng said Lim should not claim entire credit for the roughly RM1 billion presently in the state coffers as the latter did not take over Penang with "zero" money in its reserves.

He added that the Auditor-General's recent "good performance" report on Penang was "nothing new and nothing to boast about" as the state had also been "star-rated" when it was under Gerakan.

"It is not like he has acquired all the money in the state coffers himself within these two years; despite all our infrastructure projects, we have also been accumulating reserves," he said.

"In 2006, our reserves were RM770.49 million, in 2007, RM847.45million, and for 2008 (the 2 months and 8 days) we had RM1.205 billion; this does not happen overnight," he added.

'What about the re-zoning?'

NONETeng said that while Gerakan may be silent about certain issues, it has to respond to Lim's recent statement as it does not want the latter to continue to "mislead and pull wool over the eyes" of Penangites.

He added that the people are not aware that the current state government has been increasing the land conversion and re-zoning charges that will eventually make it difficult for the poor to afford houses.

"Is this how the current state government increases its coffers? We have to say this to put it all in the right perspective; do not continue to mislead Penangites," he said.

