

DAP to Utusan: Stop sniping, start debating
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The DAP has challenged Malay-language daily Utusan Malaysia to a debate over a claim that the opposition party is 'racist'.

Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony tony pua and parliamentPua was responding to a column in Sunday edition Minggu Malaysia which had also labelled the party as the worst threat facing the country.

The article, written under the pseudonym of 'Awang Selamat' stated: "Their (DAP's) colonialism is more subtle, cloaked by democratic slogans and without weapons. But the implication is great."

Pua retorted that the attack on the party is "extreme" and "exaggerated".

For the sake of "truth and justice", he dared 'Awang Selamat' or any other Utusan representative to a debate.

"The editors and owners should not hide behind the pen name to blatantly make baseless accusations, (behaving) just like a sniper," he told a press conference at Parliament House today.

Decrying the newspaper's "cowardly" approach, the DAP dared it to take up the challenge as "true defenders of their race" and to state its stand.

Pua, who is the DAP national publicity secretary, said the party will prove that it is not racist and that it is working within Pakatan Rakyat to ensure that the rights of the Malays are upheld.

NONE "We will reveal evidence that Utusan is ... racist ... and that it (presents the) worst threat (to) the country," said Pua, hoping that the Umno-owned daily "will work up the courage" to take on DAP.

"Rejecting this challenge will only portray Utusan's lack of integrity and lack of strength to uphold its stand which is defamatory and racist," he added.

He gave the paper seven days to respond to the challenge, also saying that the debate can be organised by any independent party.

"The National Union of Journalists or TV3 (can host the debate) and the format can be negotiated," he added.

'NEM is dead and buried'

At another press conference, DAP parliamentarian Liew Chin Tong questioned the "centralised" management of the just-launched Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

The Bukit Bendera representative argued that placing the ETP under the direct supervision of the premier's office is a contravention of the spirit of the New Economic Model (NEM).

The NEM, aimed at turning the country into a high-income nation and liberalising the economy, was submitted to premier Najib Abdul Razak in early September by the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC).

NONEMinister in the Prime Minister's Department Idris Jala had earlier said that "the (ETP) budget (of RM12 billion) is parked under the Prime Minister's Department in order to ensure effective management and control of expenditure".

Commenting on this today at a press conference, Liew said: "In (Part 1 of) the NEM document, the NEAC categorically declared that the era of 'centralised strategic planning' in which 'guidance and approval from the federal authorities for economic decisions' is over.

He said the way ETP is being managed by one department is "somewhat authoritarian", given that the NEM is seeking to provide "localised autonomy in decision-making (by) empowering authorities to support growth initiatives and encourage competition between localities".

liew chin tong"Going by Idris' logic perhaps it is time to dissolve all other ministries and head towards a prime ministerial dictatorship," said Liew (right).

He further pointed out that a month has lapsed since the government's promise to unveil the second part of the NEM, and that the details have yet to be released.

Pua, who was present, said: "The NEM is dead and buried because of (Malay rights pressure group) Perkasa and conservative views among Umno leaders."

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