

How Chong Eu's friends remember him
Malaysiakini.com
November 25, 2010

A compassionate man, a visionary and a real leader.

That is how a former staff of the late Dr Lim Chong Eu describes the former Penang chief minister, the man hailed as the architect of modern Penang.

Gooi Hoe Hin, who once served as Lim's personal assistant, said Chong Eu was a true leader and a great thinker who would be remembered for a long time.

"At that time, I was just a young man. He taught me a lot during the time when I worked for him from 1976 until 1980," he said.

Former Gerakan president Dr Lim Keng Yaik, who succeeded Chong Eu as president before stepping down in 2007, also held him in high regard and said that he felt very sad when he heard the news of Chong Eu's death.

"Dr Lim Chong Eu was the founding member of Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia. He guided and developed the party based on its ideology and principles.

"He was the father of modern Penang. He developed Penang from a sleepy hollow which had 17 percent of unemployment at that time into a bustling, thriving and sustainable economy.

"We shall miss his wisdom and vision. The country and especially Penang have lost an iconic son," he said in a statement from Australia.

For his long-time friend, Cheah See Kian, Chong Eu would always be remembered as a great politician who took up the challenge to develop Penang from a village into an industrial and modern state.

"He actually took up the challenge from Tan Siew Sin, who was MCA president and finance minister at that time, who said that Penang was only a village and had not developed well.

"When Chong Eu became chief minister in 1969, he took up the challenge and came up with the Penang Development Master Plan," he said.

Cheah, a former editor-in-chief of the now defunct United Post, also wrote a book on Chong Eu, titled 'The Political Profile of Lim Chong Eu', when Chong Eu was still the chief minister in 1986.

"Personally, Chong Eu was the type of person who didn't like to hear people say bad things about others. He always wanted to see proof. That was why under his leadership, you wouldn't get to say bad things about others to him.

"He was a master of his own. He was once offered to take up a federal cabinet position but declined because he wanted to ensure his development plan for Penang was not disrupted," Cheah said.

He left an indelible mark

Meanwhile, MIC president S Samy Vellu said Chong Eu was a great leader and regarded by many Malaysians as a man dedicated to the cause of national unity.

"He was a man who wouldn't give in or give up easily. He transformed Penang into an industrial mega hub and led the state government on the basis of fairness. He was a leader for all time and we will greatly miss him.

"But he will be remembered as the father of modern Penang," he said in a statement.

Housing and Local Government Minister Chor Chee Heung said Chong Eu, who served as MCA president for a year, contributed a lot to the party.

"He was a leader who had the courage to state his opinion," he said.

Meanwhile, social movement Aliran in a statement today expressed sadness and extended condolences to Chong Eu's family.

"He was an active veteran politician for almost half a century. He left an indelible mark on the socio-economic and political scene of Penang.

"Under his leadership, the state's rapid growth and vibrant industrialisation revived Penang's economy and gave serious meaning to the motto 'Penang Leads'," the statement said.

- Bernama

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/149181>