

Lim: I overruled dad on Perak boycott
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Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who is DAP secretary-general, revealed that he stepped in to overrule his father, party supremo Kit Siang, on the issue of boycotting the swearing-in of the Perak menteri besar whose post went to a PAS leader.
MCPX

On March 12, four days after the general election which saw the Pakatan Rakyat opposition taking power in five states including Perak, Kit Siang had rebuffed the appointment of a PAS man as menteri besar.

lim kit siang 01 "The decision to appoint PAS assemblyperson Mohamad Nizar Jamaludin as Perak menteri besar has caused shock and consternation to DAP leaders, members and supporters," he said in a controversial press statement.

He also vowed that all DAP Perak assemblypersons would stay away from the swearing-in ceremony for the Perak menteri besar scheduled the next day.

Kit Siang's statement came hours after it was announced in Ipoh that the Regent of Perak has agreed on Nizar's appointment.

"I overruled that," Guan Eng told Malaysiakini in a 70-minute interview at the Parliament lobby a week ago.

lim guan eng interview 290408 02 However, when asked whether the boycott move was a mistake by Kit Siang, Lim skirted the issue.

"I directed the members to attend the swearing in. I think we leave it as that," he said.

The next day, Kit Siang - who is member of parliament for Ipoh Timur - apologised for any offence caused to the Perak royalty over his statement.

He later personally conveyed the apology to the Perak crown prince at the menteri besar swearing-in ceremony which was attended by all DAP elected representatives.

Another DAP stalwart Karpal Singh, MP for Bukit Gelugor, is currently at the centre of another controversy involving the royalty.

Over the past week, the renowned lawyer had 20 police reports lodged against him after he said the Perak sultan had acted unconstitutionally in the transfer of a religious department official and criticised the Regent of Kelantan's message at a forum last month.

PAS' ambiguous role in Penang

In the exclusive interview with Malaysiakini, Guan Eng also took pains to explain PAS' ambiguous role the DAP-led state government in Penang, where the Islamic party - which has one elected representative in the island state - was not officially part of the ruling coalition.

"They were not exactly part of the coalition in the beginning but they are brought in later and we would want them to play a role as a result of discussion between PKR and PAS. I would not want to go beyond that," he said.

He argued that non-Muslim voters still fear PAS despite some had voted for the Islamic party in the March 8 national polls.

pas posters in kota bharu 240208" They voted for PAS because they wanted to teach Barisan Nasional a lesson and PAS downplayed the question of Islamic state. If that is brought to the fore, it would have been a very different situation. Our role is to ensure that wouldn't occur again.

"I think for instance the Perak menteri besar has done very well, in terms of taking a moderate approach but we want to see that reflected at the national level. Unfortunately, there are one or two statements from top PAS leaders which are not in accordance with the spirit that is agreed upon - that Pakatan Rakyat is not about Islamic state, now or in the future."

Guan Eng also said that the party may re-examine its strategy of political hedging, where top leaders contest for both state and parliamentary seats, resulting in close to one-third of its elected representatives holding dual seats.

"Of course in the past, it was important we wanted to win the seats and we felt that only a well-known candidate will win the seat, that was the primary consideration.

"To be frank, many candidates were reluctant to stand in both seats because they were afraid of losing both and they only wanted to stand in only one which they are sure of winning. We have to compel and force them to take the seats..."

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