

Lim punctures debate hopes
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The proposed 'Lim v Koh Part 2' debate may not happen.

MCPX

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has been irked by what he sees as a 'hidden agenda' by the organisers Agenda Daily - in favour of the Gerakan leadership.

lim guan eng vs koh tsu koon penang 080808 03 Though he is quite happy to participate in an open debate against his predecessor, he was uneasy with the organisers seemingly "acting on behalf of the Gerakan acting president Koh Tsu Koon or under his directives".

His suspicion was roused by the organiser's attempt to set a different agenda for the debate from the one he had proposed - the Penang land scams.

"That's my impression on the way the organiser was going about the debate.

"The organiser has decided on the debate only by talking to Koh and Gerakan, but never with us," said the DAP secretary-general, who insisted he has yet to agree to the event.

He said Agenda Daily should act independently and set the agenda of debate after deliberations with both parties.

"The organiser should not be seen acting in the interests of Koh at the expense of the state government and Penangites," he insisted.

Yesterday Lim received a letter from Agenda Daily on the proposed debate and plans to reply once his press secretary had obtained more information from the organiser.

He nonetheless was unimpressed with the news portal agency for 'jumping the gun' by claiming that both parties have agreed to a live debate.

"I can confirm that no consensus has been reached between me and the purported organiser on the debate.

"All I have said through the press was that I was prepared to debate with Koh on land scams that took place during his time and which rocked Penang's financial strength to its core," he said.

Agenda Daily news editor Hanafiah Man was reported of saying that the open live debate was slated for Wednesday, Aug 20 at an undisclosed venue in Shah Alam - and broadcasted by one of Media Prima's channels.

Hanafiah concluded that the debate would revolve around issues affecting Penangites and not exclusively on the RM40 million land scam controversy as intimated by Lim from the start.

The DAP secretary-general however dead set talking about land deals since the matter has been settled out of court.

"There is no liability at stake," Lim said.

Controversial land deals

He speculated that Koh might be avoiding questions on 'his decision making abilities' that caused Penang to lose millions of ringgit.

The Pakatan Rakyat government had revealed two land deals which allegedly cost RM124 million - including the one just settled out of court - but Lim forewarned of more land scam disclosures in the coming days.

The court case involved a 4.24ha piece of land dealt to a private contractor for quarrying activities in the Seberang Perai Tengah district, six years ago.

Lim conceded if Koh assumed full responsibility for the land debacles during his 18-year reign, he would then be prepared to debate any other Penang related issue with the Gerakan leader.

"The scam siphoned off a third of the state's cash reserve," said Lim, who initially proposed for a closed door meeting with Koh to resolve the issue, but Koh kept putting off.

Therefore Lim baited Koh to a public debate.

Last week, Lim made the debate challenge, and Koh responded with two pre-conditions - information and conclusion of the court case - for the debate.

If held, it will be the second time since 1990, Lim and Koh square off in an open debate.

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