

What fate awaits Teng?

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Yong Kai Ping and Lee Way Loon Jan 9 2009

The recent dispute over the North Klang Bus Terminal has put Selangor Assembly Speaker and Sungai Pinang State Assemblyperson Teng Chang Khim in a spot.
MCPX

DAP's outspoken four-term assemblyperson is a popular figure, known for his fiery speeches and sarcastic columns in the Chinese press.

teng chang khim dapThe open dispute between him and two other Pakatan Rakyat parliamentarians, PKR's Kapar MP S Manikavasagam and DAP's Klang MP Charles Santiago, over the plan to move transport operators to the new Klang Sentral bus terminal has erupted into an internal dispute which could threaten the fledgling opposition alliance.

Teng supported the relocation but reportedly used strong language against Manikavasagam and Santiago, allegedly accusing the duo of acting like the opposition. He is also said to have accused Santiago of being bought over by Barisan Nasional.

manikavasagamManikavasagam quit as PKR's deputy chairperson in Selangor in an act of protest, while Santiago has called for Teng to be removed as the chairman of the Select Committee on Competence, Accountability and Transparency in the Selangor state assembly, as well as a public apology from Teng.

He is also penning a letter of complaint to DAP's discipline committee about Teng's defamatory remark.

Certain quarters in the party are now afraid that Teng might face the wrath of party leaders in a central executive committee (CEC) meeting next Monday.

Teng who has butted heads with DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang and secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, was previously embroiled in a similar controversy for publicly criticising party leaders.

He, however, managed to come out of it unscathed due to a pouring of public sympathy.

There is also a worry that if referred to the discipline committee, Teng's political future might be jeopardised as there is danger that his party membership might be frozen. This will lead to an unprecedented scenario in which a state assembly speaker is disciplined by his party.

Teng: I am prepared

Teng's supporters are reportedly unhappy over the double standards involved in the controversy, saying he has been unfairly singled out while others in the party are allowed to freely wash dirty linen in public.

It is learnt that Teng had been previously criticised by the CEC for writing an article which appeared in the Oriental Daily which mocked party leaders.

The title of the article, "My leader" was believed to be a potshot at party leaders who considered themselves 'demigods' of the community.

Most controversially, at the bottom of the article Teng had written, "My leader, you are such a good dog. You deserve this good name I give to you".

Sources told Malaysiakini that Teng was not present at the meeting, which took place last November and only found out about it at a subsequent meeting, in which he defended his article as a general description of the current political landscape through "literature and philosophical" writing techniques.

Although sources claim that minutes of the CEC indicated that Teng was rebuked, he was not issued any "yellow card" or warning. As such, they say Teng is aware of the dire consequences awaiting him due to the latest controversy.

Teng told Malaysiakini today that he is not aware of rumours that he might face disciplinary action in the upcoming CEC meeting but is nevertheless prepared for any eventuality.

"True leaders must dare to face the consequences. We should stand up for the rights of the people rather than our own political interest."

Meanwhile, when contacted today, Santiago said he was still in the midst of preparing the letter of complaint against Teng, adding that it was taking a long time because Teng's remarks had to be translated as they were taken from the Chinese press.

He also clarified that his main intention in lodging a complaint was to clear his name as the defamatory remarks had caused people to doubt his sincerity as an elected representative.

Santiago denied knowledge of any possible discipline action against Teng. "I don't belong to any faction. My intention is just to do my work as people had voted for an alternative that promised to provide more transparency, rights for more information and participation in local affairs. "