

Guan Eng threatens to sue Bernama over Johor remarks
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 25 — Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has threatened legal action against national news agency Bernama if it fails to apologise and retract an article claiming he had insulted Johor during an interview with an Australian radio station.

Lim, though his press secretary Wong Kim Fei, wrote a letter to Bernama editor-in-chief Datuk Yoo Soo Heong yesterday, saying that the article published on Friday was “false, untrue and a pack of lies”.

In the article, Lim (picture) was quoted as saying, “Lim who is DAP Secretary-General, in an interview with an Australian radio station, was alleged to have said that Johor was not a safe state where the chance of being kidnapped was high, compared with Penang”.

But Wong denied this, saying that Lim had never mentioned Johor during his interview by Radio Australia on September 20.

Instead, he said Lim had merely discussed the Malaysia Solution deal with Australia, the government’s pledge to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA) and Penang issues.

“At no time did he even mention the word Johor and made any reference to the situation in other states in Malaysia during the Radio Australia interview,” he said.

He added that Lim was accompanied by two aides — Jeffrey Chew and Yap Soo Huey — both of whom could attest to the fact that the Chief Minister had not mentioned Johor.

“Bernama should withdraw and apologise unconditionally to Lim immediately and publish this in Bernama, failing which the Penang Chief Minister will be compelled to commence legal proceedings against Bernama,” Wong wrote in the letter.

He added that the Bernama report had also led to Lim being attacked “with wild ferocity” by Umno leaders and members, including Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who yesterday accused Lim of sabotaging the Barisan Nasional-led (BN) Johor.

Wong reminded the news agency that it had once before issued a similar apology to Lim for another false report on March 2008 and should not have any qualms in doing so again.

“We hope you will continue to uphold professional journalistic standards of integrity and truthfulness by doing so again. Remember, opinion is free but facts are sacred,” the letter said.

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