

Pakatan invites Liow to dialogue over KR1M products

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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 25 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) MPs have invited Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai to an open dialogue on the quality of seven food products sold at the government's Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia (KR1M).

Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua said the objective of the dialogue was to resolve the ongoing dispute instead of engaging in endless arguments through the media.

Liow has hit out at the opposition for allegedly misleading the public with its claims over the KR1M products. — File pic

"Some of the breaches are so obvious but there is no point to 'ding-dong' on this matter... meaning, we argue about it and he argues back in the media and then it goes on back and forth," he told a press conference today.

Pua said he faxed a letter to the minister this morning, inviting him to discuss the matter in an open-door meeting in Parliament on Tuesday.

"But if he wants to change the date and location of the dialogue, he is welcome to do so," he said, but stressed the meeting should be made open for full media coverage.

Pua also gave his word that PR would be willing to issue an open apology for any mistake in its allegations against the products.

The products in dispute are the 1 Malaysia-branded fruit jam, ice cream, evaporated milk, sweetened creamer, tinned sardines, tinned curry chicken and Growing Up Milk Powder.

"It was mischievous of Liow to accuse us of failing to consult with him first before alleging the products are below required standards because we are supposedly not food experts.

"We have our food consultants advising us on this matter," he said, adding that the allegations were based on the required standard stipulated in the law.

Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar agreed the allegations were not unfounded as claimed by Liow recently.

She said PR was willing to help the government promote its 1 Malaysia brand of food products if they were found to be of acceptable quality.

"If you want to talk about track record, look at what happened during the Tung Shin Hospital incident when Liow immediately denied that tear gas was fired into its premises during the July 9 Bersih rally... he issued the statement without first investigating the matter," she said.

Pua, Nurul Izzah and other PR lawmakers had recently alleged that several products sold in the government's thrift store KR1M were of substandard quality, with some failing to meet legal requirements.

On Wednesday, Liow berated the federal opposition for allegedly misleading the public with its claims as most of the products were safe for consumption, including the milk powder.

He however admitted that the oyster sauce had to be recalled as it was below the approved standard under the Food Regulations Act.

But the PR MPs said during the conference today that Liow was mistaken over the quality of the milk powder, insisting that it contained a dosage of Vitamin A that is higher than that recommended under the Act.

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