

DAP lashes out at senator

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KUALA LUMPUR: An upset DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng has slammed vice-chairman Tunku Abdul Aziz for breaking ranks with the rest of the party leaders by criticising the planned Bersih 3.0 rally.

"By making his stand public, he has contradicted the principle of collective leadership and decision-making, where one can disagree but as leaders, we all have to abide by the majority decision of the party leadership," he said yesterday.

Lim said Tunku Abdul Aziz had placed the party in an embarrassing position of being criticised by its own senator.

He said he had conveyed to Tunku Aziz the party's rebuke and the unhappiness of almost all DAP members at the public expression of his personal views against Bersih's sit-in protest.

Tunku Abdul Aziz, however, remained unperturbed by his furious colleagues and declined to be drawn into the issue or to make further comments.

He said he had been notified of the party leadership's position on his remarks, which had not been favourable to DAP and organisers of today's rally.

"I am considering holding a press conference over the issue," he said.

Tunku Abdul Aziz, a founder member of Transparency International (TI) Malaysia, joined DAP in August 2008. He had reportedly said he did not endorse the Bersih gathering as "it encourages Malaysians to break the law".

He said he supported the right to assemble but felt this must be done within the provisions of the law, adding that the organiser should cooperate with the police.

While his partymen are angry with Tunku Abdul Aziz remarks, Barisan Nasional leaders commended Tunku Abdul Aziz Ibrahim over his stand.

Wanita Barisan Nasional chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said that unlike other Opposition leaders, Tunku Abdul Aziz had the courage to speak his mind and put the people's safety, peace and harmony above political interest.

"His courage and concern show the senator's deep understanding of the democratic process, based on his experience in TI Malaysia," she said.

Shahrizat, who is also Wanita Umno chief, took the DAP leadership to task for questioning Tunku Abdul Aziz's democratic right to voice his views about the Bersih rally.

Wanita MCA secretary-general Chew Lee Giok said: "His effort in keeping our nation's interests deserves tremendous respect and I applaud him for that.

"I urge Tunku Abdul Aziz to take a firm stand and continue his opposition against demonstrations," she said yesterday.

Chew regards Tunku Abdul Aziz as "one of the most outspoken Malay leaders in the DAP and a rare leader who deals with matters rationally and responsibly".

In **MACHANG**, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed also heaped praise on Tunku Abdul Aziz.

"There are many other ways that Bersih can channel its grouses. Malaysia is a democratic country and if they are not happy with the Government, they can vote us out," he said.

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