

Penang BN wants review of port privatisation
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THE Penang Barisan Nasional (BN) has asked for the Penang Port privatisation issue to be reviewed and deliberated under the National Economic Council (NEC) following the Finance Ministry's rejection of the state's proposed free port status.

This has put BN and Pakatan Rakyat on the same front in wanting Penang Port returned to Penangites. State BN chief Teng Chang Yeow said since the privatisation deal with business tycoon Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhari is not yet inked, he urged Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to look into the issue.

"We've had informal discussions with industry players on Penang Port remaining independent. I don't think it's too late to turn things around because the deal has not been signed," he said.

When told that they conferred with Pakatan's aim in bringing the port back to Penang, Teng replied they were doing things differently.

"We are doing our homework. We don't simply go to the press because we must first understand the issue before bringing it up to federal level ... we're unaware of many things.

"We hope the NEC will look from the port's angle, the shipping industry's needs and the sentiment of Penangites," he said.

On June 13, Najib reportedly told Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong in Parliament that the concept of the free port no longer existed as Penang already had five free trade zones, making the free port status redundant.

Najib's response seemed to have thrown cold water on the big ideals of Penang BN that Teng promised Penangites when he announced goodies in store for voters once "BN forms the state government".

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