

Tony Pua calls Johor DAP chief's comments on Malaysian Dream movement "irresponsible and unfounded"

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The public spats between DAP leaders over leadership issues continued today with national publicity chief Tony Pua (pic) describing Johor state chairman Dr Boo Cheng Hau's comments on the Malaysian Dream movement as "irresponsible and unfounded".

Pua said the Malaysian Dream movement was a rallying cry and campaign theme for party adviser Lim Kit Siang when he was contesting the Gelang Patah seat in the 13th general election. The purpose of the movement was to unite Malaysians against the threats of racism, extremism and religious bigotry.

Boo had reportedly said on Friday the Malaysian Dream movement did not have the approval of DAP's central executive committee. He also allegedly said certain figures had been given unchecked authority to raise funds using DAP resources and carried out activities which usurped the powers of other party organs.

His comments came after the party's national organising secretary Anthony Loke issued a statement on Friday ordering party members to air their grouses through the party's proper channels rather than in the media.

Loke said the public infighting has created a negative impression of the party among the public.

"I am shocked and disappointed at the statements made by Dr Boo with regards to the Malaysian Dream movement. I can only describe Dr Boo's statements as irresponsible and completely unfounded," Pua said in a statement today.

"Dr Boo himself recognised that the Malaysian Dream movement was raised during Lim's election campaign, who was facing a titanic battle against the heavy machinery Umno had rolled out for their candidate, no less than the then menteri besar, Tan Sri Abdul Ghani Othman.

"Lim was being attacked viciously by the mainstream media and Umno leaders, who claimed that he was trying to preach to the Chinese to hate the Malays. Lim's response to these unrelenting attacks was to rally for a Malaysian Dream, to dispel the lies and malicious allegations being circulated about him," he said.

Pua also said the objective of the Malaysian Dream is identical to the one fought for by Umno founder Datuk Onn Jaafar 62 years ago in 1951.

Onn, the father of third Prime Minister Tun Hussein and Datuk Seri Hishammuddin's grandfather, had suggested that Umno open its doors to non-Malays. He also proposed that Umno change its name from the United Malays National Organisation to United Malaysians National Organisation.

"How is the Malaysian Dream movement in the Gelang Patah contest, a vision which Lim shared with all Malaysians to unite them in harmony, to fight against racism and extremism, an abuse of power as Dr Boo has alleged?" Pua asked.

He said the Malaysian Dream was not mere rhetoric, as it spawned the "Impian Sarawak" campaign which was launched to urge all Malaysians to be agents of change and to bridge the divide between east and west Malaysia.

"While the Malaysian Dream movement which was launched in Gelang Patah did not require any major use of DAP resources, the campaign in Sarawak will require the participation of all major states to attract volunteers, raise funds and to take an active part in bringing change to the rural interiors of the state," Pua said.

He said Boo's disapproval of the Malaysian Dream movement left DAP leaders with a sour taste in their mouths.

"Our members and supporters are very disappointed that our leaders are expressing their dissatisfaction and unhappiness in public, without any prior attempts to resolve the matter internally. Our members and supporters have a right to be angry, especially as we just saw the challenge of the Registrar of Societies to destabilise the party."

Pua said Boo's grievances were viewed seriously and a meeting of all state leaders will be called after tonight's fundraising dinner in Simpang Renggam.

Since the start of the week, the DAP has been put in a spot with party leaders involved in a series of public exchanges.

The highlight of the past week was the saga of Duyong assemblyman Goh Leong San and his deputy Lim Jak Wong (Bachang assemblyman), who resigned as opposition leader and opposition whip of the Malacca state assembly respectively on Tuesday.

This came less than a week after Sabah Luyang assemblyman Hiew King Cheu quit DAP to become an independent candidate.

In Kedah, Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari's appointment as interim state chairperson has led to party veteran Boo raising a storm.

In Perak, the leadership of Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham and his cousin, Nga Kor Ming, in Perak DAP is back in the news after a moratorium in the run-up to the May 5 polls.

A political analyst had put down the rise in complaints by DAP leaders and representatives as a sign that the party was in a quandary over how to deal with the gap between the expectations of the grassroots and the effect of the young professionals in the party. - October 11, 2013.

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