

Stop attacking Dyana Sofya and focus on important issues, Guan Eng tells Umno
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By Looi Sue-Chern

The DAP has warned Umno to stop the personal attacks against the party's Teluk Intan by-election candidate Dyana Sofya Mohd Daud.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said real issues that matter – such as the people's livelihood, rising prices of goods, the fight against corruption, freedom and justice – should be the focus of the by-election campaign, not attacks against the party's young female lawyer.

He said attacks against the 27-year-old Perak-born lawyer, who is also the political aide of DAP stalwart and Gelang Patah MP Lim Kit Siang, had come not only from men but women as well, including Umno wanita chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

Shahrizat had said that Dyana had allowed herself to be used by the DAP to further its political agenda.

Lim said the DAP had taken a risk by fielding a Malay female candidate in a Chinese seat with 23,301 Malay voters (38.6%), 25,310 Chinese voters (41.9%) and 11,468 Indian voters (19%).

He said this was the first time in history the party had made such a decision.

"This is an effort by the DAP to demonstrate that the party fights for a Malaysian's Malaysia, unlike Barisan Nasional (BN) that is a race-based coalition.

"We are showing a Malaysian image, that Malay election candidates can speak up for the Chinese and that Chinese candidates can also speak up for the Malays.

"For the sake of inclusiveness, diversity, freedom and justice, and the focus on issues that matter to the people, we will take the risk... because the

battle of the soul of Malaysia will be determined by the people," Lim said today.

Dyana had been subjected to attacks even before she was formally named as the DAP's candidate for the Teluk Intan parliamentary seat, which fell vacant with the death of its incumbent Seah Leong Peng from cancer on May 1.

The smear campaign started with several blogs putting up pictures of a woman wearing a pink bikini, claiming that she was Dyana and questioning Dyana's character as a Muslim. However, social media users said the bikini-clad woman was actually Filipina actress Pauleen Luna.

Political analysts also believed that DAP's decision to field Dyana as a candidate was to shed its image as a Chinese-centric party. Lim's remarks this morning to justify Dyana's candidacy seemed to confirm this.

Lim said issues like the people's livelihood, the economy and corruption were more important than a person's race.

He also came to Dyana's defence over remarks that she was not born in Teluk Intan, unlike local boy Datuk Mah Siew Keong, who is Barisan Nasional's candidate for the by-election.

Lim expected the issue to be used against Dyana but he repeated his call for the by-election to focus on the real issues that affect the people.

"As long as the person is a Malaysian, who can fight for the country and its people, where he or she was born does not matter. I am not from Penang but in 2008, the people of Penang still selected me.

"After being elected an assemblyman and appointed Penang chief minister, the Pakatan Rakyat state government had proven our sincerity and hardwork in bringing change to the state," he said.

Mah, who is also Gerakan president, is a two-time MP for Teluk Intan. He held the seat in the 1999 and 2004 general elections but lost to the DAP's M. Manogaran and Seah Leong Peng in 2008 and 2013 with a 1,470 and 7,313 vote majority respectively.

Lim said Mah, being a more familiar face in the constituency, had an advantage over Dyana who is the underdog.

"He has good support. He even has the support of the Raja Bomoh," he said, referring to reports yesterday that the infamous Raja Bomoh Sedunia, Ibrahim Mat Zin, was also present during the naming of Mah as a candidate to give his blessings.

Ibrahim had gained notoriety when he performed a ritual at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport purportedly to help find the missing MH370 flight in March.

He had also performed rituals near Kampar, Perak, on a stretch of the highway where former DAP chairman Karpal Singh was killed in a road accident on April 17.

Lim also joked about Mah saying that he was also a handsome candidate who would be up against the young and attractive Dyana.

"He said he is handsome but looks is not going to decide the outcome of the election. What is more important is whether he has the principles, the idealism and the willingness to fight for the people or the cronies (of BN).

"Though we may not have the money and power, I think Dyana Sofya has the guts and courage to speak up for all the rakyat, regardless of race." Lim was speaking to reporters in Air Itam after accompanying the DAP's Bukit Gelugor by-election candidate Ramkarpal Singh in his walkabout in the market.

He said Ramkarpal and all Penang MPs would be accompanying Dyana at the nomination centre in Teluk Intan tomorrow.

However, Lim and all DAP state reps in Penang will not be in Teluk Intan tomorrow as they are attending the first day of the state legislative assembly sitting. – May 18, 2014.

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