

**PKR 5 must apologise, says Penang exco
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By Looi Sue-Chern**

A Penang exco member wants five PKR assemblymen to apologise for abstaining from voting against a Barisan Nasional motion on land reclamation last week at the legislative assembly.

Jagdeep Singh Deo, who is also state DAP deputy chairman, said the party's Tanjung Bungah rep, Teh Yee Cheu, who initially voted to support the motion had quickly admitted his mistake, apologised and declared that he was willing to face punishment from the party.

"To err is human and to forgive, divine. I hope Teh's apology and his admission of mistake will be taken into account as a mitigation factor.

"I put the same sentiment to the PKR five. If they had made a mistake, it is no too late (to admit). They can do the same as Tanjung Bungah (Teh)," Jagdeep said.

Last Friday, a motion by BN assemblyman Muhamad Farid Saad was tabled at the state legislative assembly to compel the state government to subject land reclamation projects to public hearings.

Farid also asked for all new land reclamation projects to be put on hold pending a detailed study to ensure such projects would not be detrimental to the environment, and to cancel projects that negatively impacted the environment.

The motion was dismissed after it was put to a vote and failed to get support from the majority of the House. Only 10 members from the House supported it – nine from BN and one from DAP, while 23 from Pakatan Harapan voted against it.

Five PKR backbenchers abstained from voting, creating controversy in the state government. They were Ong Chin Wen (Bukit Tengah), Cheah Kah Peng (Kebun Bunga), Lee Khai Loon (Machang Bubuk), Dr T. Jayabalan (Batu Uban) and Dr Norlela Ariffin (Penanti).

Jagdeep said the Pakatan Harapan government allowed its assemblymen to say their peace and would not prevent any from stating their views and opinions, which might or might not be consistent with the government's view.

"But when it comes to voting en bloc on administrative issues, they (the PKR five) should have walked with the state government," he added.

Meanwhile, state DAP chairman Chow Kon Yeow (pic, left) in a statement also said he was disappointed that the five PKR reps had yet to explain why they did not stand by the state government in rejecting the Umno motion, other than saying it was a vote of

political conscience.

Chow, who is also local government exco, said none of them took part to debate the motion "to let their voices of conscience be heard".

PKR information director Fahmi Fadzil said today that the party allowed its reps to vote according to their conscience on certain issues and was satisfied with the explanations by the five.

Fahmi said conscience votes were normal in a democracy and should be encouraged.

He said although PKR disagreed with the Umno stand on the issue, it agreed that a detailed study on future land reclamation projects was good.

"At the same time, I ask that no more statements be made on this by the party leadership until this is discussed further at Pakatan Harapan level," he added. – November 24, 2015.

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