

Penang BN hits out at Guan Eng for attacking PKR 5
Malaysian Insider
Nov 24, 2015
By Looi Sue-Chern

Penang Barisan Nasional (BN) today joined in the criticism against Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng for his censuring of five PKR assemblymen who abstained from voting on a BN motion in the state legislature.

State BN chairman Teng Chang Yeow said Lim had failed to demonstrate leadership and was instead harping on the defeated motion as a "tactic" to divert from the discontent over his administration.

Teng, who is also Penang Gerakan chief, said Lim had spoken at length about the consequences if the BN's motion on land reclamation had been approved, instead of addressing the concerns of the people and why the PKR five had abstained from voting.

Teng said BN itself knew for sure that the motion tabled by Pulau Betong assemblyman Muhamad Farid Saad last Friday at the state legislative assembly would not be successful as it only had ten assemblymen in the House.

But the motion needed to be tabled anyway, Teng said, to "highlight the concern of the people" and it was an unexpected development that one DAP rep would support it and five PKR reps would abstain from voting.

"The chief minister should address this problem within his party and coalition, rather than harping on the defeated motion, which has no impact on the state," Teng said in a statement today.

Farid's motion last Friday asked the state legislative assembly to compel the state government to subject land reclamation projects to public hearing.

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

The motion was dismissed after 23 voted against it, while 10 voted for it and five reps abstained.

Lim has since been facing criticism from BN and ally PKR for his attacks on the five PKR assemblymen – Ong Chin Wen (Bukit Tengah), Cheah Kah Peng (Kebun Bunga), Dr T. Jayabalan (Batu Uban), Dr Norlela Ariffin (Penanti) and Lee Khai Loon (Machang Bubuk).

Ong reportedly said the five decided to vote according to their conscience on the matter.

While state DAP leaders argued that the PKR backbenchers, being members of the

Pakatan Harapan state government, should have voted against the motion with the other backbenchers, there is a split in how PKR views the matter.

PKR information director Fahmi Zainol said the party accepted the five reps' explanation on their conscience vote, which was a "normal" in a democracy, but Penang PKR information director Ahmad Farid Arshad's opinion was consistent with the state government's. – November 24, 2015.

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