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Assembly-Budget (Cheating)

T'GGANU GOVT DECEIVING THE PEOPLE WITH 2004 BUDGET, SAYS BN REP

KUALA TERENGGANU, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblyman for Kemasik today described as "cheating the people" the 2004 Budget tabled by the PAS-led state government yesterday.

Datuk Abu Bakar Ali said the state government had deceived the people by including the RM816 million revenue from petroleum and gas royalties in the budget although royalty payments have been stopped as the issue was still pending in court.

He said the royalties should not have been included because this would lead the state to face a bigger deficit as compared to the deficit amount tabled by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang at the state assembly yesterday.

"Revenue from oil and gas should have been omitted from the budget as PAS has been saying they have lost the petroleum royalty. This means the Menteri Besar has again lied to the people.

"If this is the Budget presented, (then) it's cheating the people. The Menteri Besar has again deceived the people in this august House," he said when debating the budget.

Hadi, in tabling the budget, had said the state government had again taken into account the RM816 million revenue from petroleum and gas royalties in the 2004 Budget as the state government considered the royalties as its right.

He said the state government expects to earn RM1.12 billion from petroleum and other sources while its operational expenditures next year would be RM1.13 billion, thus incurring RM10.2 million deficit.

Abu Bakar said the state government's actual revenue after deducting the petroleum royalty would be about RM309 million.

"This means the actual deficit will be RM826 million," he said.

He said the petroleum royalty issue had been taken to court and under the State Assembly Standing Orders 46(7), the matter cannot be incorporated in the budget.

"When what is allocated in the budget cannot be delivered, PAS will blame the federal government. They will say the oil royalty money has been robbed by the federal government," he said.

On Hadi's tribute to former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his vast contributions to the country leading to the recognition of Malaysia as an Islamic State, Abu Bakar said Hadi paid his tribute in an arrogant manner.

He said Hadi's cynical remarks should not have come from the mouth of a leader who wants to turn Malaysia into an Islamic State.

In fact, Hadi's warning that he would oppose any Prime Minister of Malaysia who did not practise the true Islamic teachings showed his arrogance, he said.

"Initially, the Menteri Besar congratulated Datuk Seri Abdullah (Ahmad Badawi) and after that warned the new Prime Minister to implement Islamic teachings according to Hadi's wishes.

"DAP leaders, who openly reject Islamic State and are anti-Islamic State, PAS has been good to them but this should not happen in a state which wants to be recognised as a model Islamic State," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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