

PBB denies 'RM10 mil cybertrooper fund' claim
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Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) has brushed off a claim that a RM10 million cyber-war fund has been set up by Sarawak BN to recruit bloggers to attack the opposition.

NONEAsajaya assemblyman Karim Hamzah (left) and Petra Jaya MP Fadilah Yusof, whose names were in a web posting, both denied the existence of any such fund.

"There is no such thing. These are complete lies," were their similar responses when contacted today.

Fadilah even challenged the whistleblowers to name every blogger who has been recruited.

Several Sarawak websites had recently published unattributed reports stating that Karim and Fadilah are offering RM5,000 monthly to "Sarawakians with journalistic instinct" to work for the state government.

According to the posting, those shortlisted are to be trained by New Straits Times, The Malay Mail and Utusan Malaysia at Pusat Latihan Umno in Janda Baik, Pahang.

"Every blogger is entitled to a RM30,000 grant to set up their blog..." it further claims.

Karim scoffed at the notion that such information would even be leaked via the Internet.

"Even though we have a strategy, we will keep it confidential. You don't reveal your trump card to your opponents," he said.

Asked how the posting could have come about, he replied cryptically: "What can we do? Now everyone can use the cyber world to dump in information."

'No interview with radio station'

Karim also rubbished a columnist's claim in Malaysiakini that he had told shortwave station Radio Free Sarawak (RFS) it is only "fair" that Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud should accumulate wealth in public office.

NONE"I have never spoken to Radio Free Sarawak before. (The radio station) is hopeless," he claimed.

Among other comments, he had reportedly said: "He (Taib, left) has been in power for the last 40 years... he has been open to a lot of opportunities, whereby his children also can participate in business, and then, using the kind of networking that they can have, and then build up their riches."

RSF, however, confirmed that Karim had made the assertion that it was only fair for Taib to do business, make money and get rich from the opportunities available to him in public office.

He was recorded as having said those remarks, which were published as a podcast in RFS's website on Dec 4.

In an email to Malaysiakini, however, RFS admitted that Karim was not interviewed directly by the radio station, but a recording of the session was obtained by a journalist from an English-language national daily.

"The news story (that appeared on Dec 8) in Malaysiakini was a sum up of his core arguments," said RFS.

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