

'Penang Pakatan government still in honeymoon'

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Penang Opposition Leader Azhar Ibrahim said Pakatan Rakyat appears to be still on honeymoon despite having taken over the state government in 2008.

He said that Pakatan merely used the blame game as a strategy to run down Umno as well as the previous Penang BN and federal governments.

However, when it starts to do work, many problems arise, clearly indicating that Pakatan cannot rule the state, he added.

Azhar (right) cited several examples wNONEhere the DAP-led government had failed to fulfill its promises to the rakyat during the last general election in 2008.

"They said we would have a tiger park (in Bukit Jambul), but we have not seen one until now...what remains probably is a tiger show," said Azhar, who is debating the state government's 2012 budget at the state legislative assembly today.

"There was also much brouhaha over a Korean company which was supposed to invest RM300 million in a golf course, but all seems to be quiet on that front," he added.

The Penaga assemblyperson also hit out at Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and his Pakatan colleagues for not declaring their assets.

Other 'election promises, he added, included, state agency Penang Development Corporation to paint flats and build low to medium cost homes.

He also made fun about the number of MoUs (memorandums of understanding) which the state has inked with several companies, including those related to the proposed underground tunnel from Bagan Ajam to Gurney Drive, and the Halal Hub.

"If we take all these MoUs, we can already make an island out of them...they are all part of the 13th general election" joked the state Umno liason committee.

"It seems when they started working, nothing turns out well. I think these promises will be made again next year," he said.

"Pakatan is not able to govern Penang, it is obvious after they were given a chance to rule for one term...it is time to change (the government)," he added.

Highest budget deficit ever

Meanwhile, Azhar criticised Lim for announcing the highest deficit budget in history although it offered many goodies to Penangites.

The deficit is estimated at RM213.71 million, which will be absorbed by the state's accumulated savings which stood at RM572.49 million as at Dec 31 last year.

Lim (left) also announced in March 2008, the state debts had amounted to RM630.13 million but currently it stands at RM29.66 million, a reduction of RM600.47 million.

Azhar urged Lim to clarify that the state was able to reduce its debts due to the migration of water assets to Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd via a deal inked on June 2.

"Lim was bragging about this at the recent Deepavali Open House in Times Square," he quipped.

Azhar added that if this was not clarified, it would appear as if the state had spend about RM14 million per month for 3.5 years in order to reduce debts from RM600.4 million to RM29.9 million.

In response, Lim urged Azhar to read his budget speech as the matter had been explained there.

He refuted Azhar's comment that the state had paid out RM14 million every month since Pakatan came to power in 2008, to settle the state's debts.

He then launched into a little 'accounting lecture' to explain to the Umno assemblypersons about the concepts of cash flow, assets and debts, saying "for further information, I have to charge a tuition fee".

"What remains a fact that cannot be denied is that the debts were accrued during BN's rule and have now been resolved by the Pakatan government," he added, followed by loud thumping on the table by Pakatan reps.

"If this is not a good thing, are the Umno reps suggesting that we should increase our debts like the federal government? I do not think so," he added.

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