

**NGO:Penang BN responsible for land scam**  
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A Malay NGO says the BN is responsible for the RM40 million Tan Hak Ju land case, even though the quantum of payment the Penang government has been ordered to pay the businessman is RM500,000.

The previous BN administration was responsible for the land deal in Seberang Perai in 2005 and it must therefore account for the loss of public funds, even if it costs the state RM1, the Penang Malay Congress (PMC) said today.

"Even if it's RM1, it is still the people's money. BN should not try to act innocent just because the compensation has been reduced from RM40 million to RM500,000," PMC president Rahmad Isahak told a press conference.

"Penangites cannot be so easily fooled by political trickery. Besides, the case is still up for appeal," Rahmad said.

NONEHe was referring to a Jan 10 Court of Appeal decision, which ruled that the Penang government need only pay Tan RM500,000 instead of the RM40 million he demanded.

The Pakatan Rakyat government of Penang has criticised the previous BN administration for the case, but the latter continues to deny any fault.

Since the court decision, state BN working committee chairperson Dr Teng Hock Nan (left) has demanded a retraction and apology from the Penang government for labelling the case a "scandal".

In 2005, Tan sued the state government for cancelling his application to purchase two plots of land in Butterworth for quarrying work as the areas are owned by two Chinese associations.

'One should not be afraid of the truth'

Rahmad also said the question of a scandal or scam would not have arisen if the former Penang chief minister and his deputy had come forward to testify before the state government investigative committee in 2008.

However, the two important witnesses had failed to do so, although "one should not be afraid of truth but only afraid when one is wrong," he added.

Rahmad claimed that a scam had indeed occurred, with an civil service officer colluding with a BN leader in the administration to approve the land deal.

This "shameful" act must be probed further by the state government and the culprit brought to book to set an example for those who intend to repeat the same folly, he said.

He said Teng, a former Penang executive councillor, should take full responsibility for the matter and be accountable for the compensation that the state is now forced to pay the businessman.

"Please do not drag the rakyat into your political games to cover your own mistakes," Rahmad told BN leaders.

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