

Zainal to Guan Eng: We have 'proof' so quit now
MalaysiaKini.com
February 17, 2012
Susan Loone

Penang Umno has risen up to the challenge posed by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng to show proof that Bayan Mutiara land was not sold via an open tender.

State Umno liaison committee chief Zainal Abidin Osman (right) today revealed that developer Ivory Properties Berhad's announcement to Bursa Saham allegedly proves that the land was sold via a negotiated tender.

With the revelation, Zainal Abidin urged Lim to resign from his post and retire from politics as the latter had said he was willing to give it up if Umno could prove the land sale was negotiated.

"If these documents or the developer are wrong, action can be taken against them by the Bursa Saham," Zainal Abidin said at a press conference, waving the documents in his hands.

"However, if the CM lies, he would be judged by the people," he added.

Zainal Abidin said according to the website of the Penang Development Corporation (PDC), the closing date for the open tender for the 103-acre land near Pulau Jerejak was on Dec 31, 2010.

Zainal Abidin said it was rather surprising that following the open tender, the developer had sent a letter to Bursa Saham in March last year saying that it was planning to acquire the land.

Only on July 25, Zainal Abidin pointed out, that the company declared that it had received a letter from the PDC stating that it had won the bid for the land.

"Is this how an open tender works? If it was an open tender, the developer does not need to apply to buy the land and inform Bursa Saham," he said.

Ivory Properties later inked an agreement with the PDC in November, last year, to buy the parcel of land for RM1.07 billion.

"The CM has actually failed to answer questions on the land that we have posed to him," said the former Nibong Tebal MP.

"Instead, he keeps criticising and condemning Umno for asking these questions. All he wants to do is make people angry and hateful towards the party and its leaders," he lamented.

The state development agency sold the land to Ivory Properties last year, and the returns from the sale would go to the construction of 12,000 affordable houses in Batu Kawan, priced between RM72,000 and RM220,000.

Vicious campaign of lies

However, Zainal Abidin said the state government had not announced who won the bid for the land, and who were the members of the tender board.

He expressed surprise that only two companies bid for the prime land, located south of Penang bridge, which was finally sold at RM240 per sq ft.

Lim said the reserve price of the land was at RM200 psf, and the valuation price was only about RM65

psf.

In a press conference earlier today, Lim (left) complained that Umno leaders have systematically carried out a “vicious campaign of lies” against the state government over the Bayan Mutiara land sale.

He was referring to Zainal Abidin’s and Kota Belud MP Abdul Rahman Dahlan’s statements that there was no open tender and that the selling price of the land was 50 percent lower than the market value of RM420 psf.

The DAP secretary general had also been criticised for insulting Malaysians for appointing Singapore consultants for the state’s massive affordable housing project in Batu Kawan.

Meanwhile, Zainal Abidin said PDC and the state government had also pledged to hand over a freehold status land to the developer although Lim had promised in 2008 that he would not convert reclaimed land in Penang.

Lim had then said that such conversion of land from lease to freehold status was against the 1975 National Land Code unless the area was developed by PDC.

“What has happened now? The land has been sold to a private developer and the state is willing to convert it to freehold status,” said Zainal Abidin.

Zainal Abidin said Lim did not care for Penangites as he was willing to hand over the land to a private developer when it could be developed into an affordable housing project or recreational park for the public.

“He has set aside public interest. Why can’t the PDC develop this land when it has the expertise to do so and have in the past constructed thousand of homes for the rakyat?” he queried.

Zainal Abidin was also irked by Lim’s suggestion that if Umno was not happy with the sale of the land, the party’s cronies should purchase it.

He said Lim’s statement was “irresponsible” as he is not a property broker but the chief minister of Penang.

“It is already a bad deal for Penangites. This remark has disparaged the dignity of the state government,” said Zainal Abidin.

“Who will believe the state government if the CM continues to make statements like this? Please think before you speak,” he told Lim.

Zainal Abidin then said Umno was the opposition party in Penang and its job is to question the state government on its policies, with facts and evidence.

“Why does Lim asks us to resign? We thought the DAP was for freedom of speech. Why can’t we question and criticise with facts? Please answer our queries,” he quipped.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/189498>