

Foreigners joined Pengerang protest, claims Azalina
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Pengerang BN member of parliament Azalina Othman lambasted outsiders, whom she said made much out of nothing at a protest against a planned oil refinery in her constituency.

azalina othman"I read an Internet portal's news report that there was a protest in Pengerang.

"I found it weird, when I went down there I didn't see any protest (by locals)," said the former tourism minister today.

Azalina (left) said when debating the royal address in the Dewan Rakyat that based on her observations, she detected cars used by demonstrators that bore foreign registration plates.

"The demonstration we saw, the cars were from a foreign country.

"I don't want to say it, but we know they are from a neighbouring country," said Azalina.

She downplayed the protest, saying that "only 200 attended" and it was not reflective of the views of people in the constituency, which has more than 33,000 voters.

pengerang protest demo 180312The demonstrators on Sunday had protested against national oil company Petronas' plans to set up a gas refinery in Pengerang.

The protesters were concerned that the RM20 billion Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (Rapid) would pollute the environment, and particularly affect sea fishing activities.

"I take this opportunity to stress that the BN government is not a cruel government... the state government has given assurance that their income will be protected when they are moved to a new area," said Azalina.

She also took Johor PKR chief Chua Jui Meng to task for claiming that the project was a "radioactive factory".

"He said this is a 'radioactive factory'... isn't this slander? I am very sad. Even if you want to oppose, you can just do so. No need to slander," she said, adding that she could always debate with Chua on the issue.

Pengerang residents in seven villages are also worried that the first phase Rapid project, involving 9,500 acres, might see some of them being evicted.

NONEThe second phase is even bigger, covering 22,500 acres.

A spokesperson for the protesters, Kasran Abdullah, said the local people were not opposed to development, but they don't want to be relocated.

"A four- to five-acre oil palm plantation can bring about RM1,000 to RM2,000 monthly. If we move out, how are we supposed to feed ourselves?" the former school headmaster said.

Kasran said 35 percent of the local population were fishermen who were expecting to face water pollution problems as a result of the refinery.

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