

**Hilmi, Chua in hot water for demolishing shrine**  
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Penang Port Sdn Bhd chairman Hilmi Yahya and Penang Port Commission chairman Dr Chua Soi Lek are facing the wrath of the Hindu community over the demolition of a 40-year-old shrine at the Prai Bulk Cargo Terminal in the Prai Industrial Area.

The state government has quickly dived in to support the devotees of the Muniswarar shrine, many of whom are port workers, and have called for the duo to apologise over the matter.

NONEPenang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who made a site visit yesterday, wants Teluk Bahang Umno assemblyperson Hilmi and MCA president Chua to apologise and provide an alternative site for the shrine.

Lim said the act of demolishing the shrine shows “disrespect” to the Hindu and Indian community who have been patronising the holy site for four decades.

He added the port authorities have admitted that they had not given any notice to the shrine’s caretakers before it was torn down on Friday at 8am.

“Although the government can demolish a building without notice but we in the Penang state government would always give a notice or at least paste it around the affected areas,” Lim told reporters.

“Hilmi and Chua should at least admit they are wrong and find ways to rebuild the temple.

“Instead, they are unhappy with the media for reporting the matter, saying they were misquoted for agreeing to pay the cost of rebuilding the shrine,” he added.

BN helping Indians?

Lim, who is DAP secretary-general, said he thought the “old days of tearing down” Hindu temples were long gone but it seems to have returned.

“This is a strong warning to the Hindu and Indian community that your temples are not safe,” he added.

NONELim stressed that the 13th general election is near and he reckoned that the BN would be treating the Indian community in a better manner.

“However, they have still decided to tear down the shrine. This is built on federal land.

“If they are allowed to come back (regain the state), maybe it won’t be just the Hindu shrine but other places as well,” he added.

Deputy Chief Minister II P. Ramasamy, who accompanied Lim, said he cannot imagine why the shrine had to be demolished with “maximum force” by using a bulldozer.

He said the authorities cannot just tear down a shrine as “it is not your house”, adding they should have at least informed the Village and Security Development committee or the Indian workers who have been patronising the place.

thaipusam najib 070212“They must at least provide an alternative land. Prime Minister Najib Razak (left) is always talking about transformation but they come here to rear their ulgy heads.

"The Indians are already a wounded community, to do this further is not good. This seems to be a repeat of what happened to a temple in Klang in 2007, which sparked the Hindraf movement.

"This is a tragedy for the port workers. We will take up this matter seriously until the duo apologise and provide alternative land," stressed the Prai assemblyperson.

BN: Issue resolved

Meanwhile, at the Penang BN working committee meeting yesterday, state BN chief Teng Chang Yeow said the Hindu temple issue has been resolved by Hilmi.

"The issue is actually related to some security matter and should not have been politicised.

"The PPSB is already willing to bear the reconstruction cost of the affected shrine," he added.

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