

PKR leaders rise to Azmin Ali's defence

MalaysiaKini.com

May 04, 2012

By S Pathmawathy

PKR leaders demand that Umno-linked media as well as bloggers aligned to the party apologise for spinning "dastardly lies" about its deputy president Azmin Ali being caught on camera in an extramarital tryst in a toilet.

kamarul bahrain abbasTeluk Kemang MP Kamarul Baharin Abbas (right) hit out at the "malicious allegations" aimed at smearing Azmin's reputation just to divert media focus away from the fallout of the Bersih 3.0 rally and the shoddy Scorpene submarine deal under probe in France.

"The series of slanders is evidence that Umno-BN is trying to shift public attention away from the issues of corruption and the weak state of their administration," said Women's chief and Ampang MP Zuraida Kamaruddin.

Both Malay-language daily Utusan Malaysia and blogger Papagomo published the photos of the purported affair, which Azmin claimed were fabricated.

The Utusan article was based on Azmin's denial that he was involved in an affair, as claimed by the pro-Umno blogger.

However, the article was accompanied by several pictures of a man, which the blog claimed was Azmin, in the company of a woman.

The PKR leader claimed that the toilet tryst claim was the latest in a string of recent allegations targeting his character, beginning with the one about his daughter's paternity followed by his alleged instigation of the Bersih 3.0 chaos.

Police urged to get cracking

At a joint press conference at party headquarters with parliamentarians, senators and divisional leaders from various states, Kamarul said if the stills from the alleged video "exist" then instead of posting them on blogs, the "culprit" should have lodged a police report.

He urged the police to investigate the individual spreading and distributing the "obscene photographs", as it is intended to corrupt the public with gutter politics.

The party's information chief Muhammad Nur Manuty added that the Umno-controlled media "couldn't care least about the implications" of such claims.

"It is clearly a manifestation of desperation," he said, criticising the ruling party for going so low.

NONEJohor chief Dr Chua Jui Meng (left) said that the timing of the allegation "is not coincidental" as recent events have blemished the BN leadership, especially the way the government tackled the Bersih 3.0 rally.

Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Akin said that he had phone calls from primary school teachers complaining that Utusan's frontpage had sparked interest among students pestering them to explain the alleged intimacy between Azmin and the unknown women.

"Imagine having to answer to children aged 9 and 10 who come across the newspaper in their classroom?" he asked.

Living in glass house danger

"Just remember that all politician live in glass houses and by doing this you are encouraging a disgusting culture," added Pahang chief Fauzi Abdul Rahman, pointing out the likelihood of their political opponents facing a similar fate.

NONE Asked why PKR did not lodge a police report on the allegations, Kamarul said:

"If the stills are legitimate then it is the accuser who has to provide the evidence to the police.

"When (Prime Minister) Najib (Abdul Razak) was accused of having known (Mongolian) Altantuya (Shaariibuu), when he denied it Umno members believed him, they didn't lodge a police report or question him. We believe Azmin," interjected Fauzi.

Azmin is suing Utusan for RM100 million in damages for the front-page report which reproduced the photos from pro-Umno blogs.

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