

## Penang BN reps challenged over 'misleading' claims

MalaysiaKini.com

May 07, 2012

By Susan Loone

Separate complaints were lodged during the Penang legislative assembly sitting today by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and Jahara Hamid (BN-Teluk Ayer Tawar) about 'misleading and baseless' statements having been made.

Lim claimed that Muhammad Farid Saad (BN-Pulau Betong) had accused him of saying he 'does not care about housing issues' in an interview with independent radio station BFM89.9.

He chided Muhammad Farid for saying he had delivered a "sermon" (*kalimah*) during the interview, noting that he (Lim) is not a Muslim and that the word should not be used wantonly.

Lim's radio interview and Muhammad Farid's argument with the chief minister was reported in *Star* on May 4.

However Lim denied saying 'we don't care', and that the contents of the interview clip bear him out.

"These are baseless allegations and Muhammad Farid had been asked to withdraw his statements before," he said.

"I will not say he lied. I want him to explain. The speaker (Abdul Halim Hussain) must determine if there is proof of what he says or take the appropriate action."

State Opposition Leader Azhar Ibrahim stood up to defend his colleague, saying Lim should wait until Muhammad Farid is in the House before raising the complaint.

Abdul Halim then said he would ask Muhammad Farid for clarification when he turns up.

Before the sitting could proceed, Jahara invoked a Standing Order to compel state exco Phee Boon Poh to apologise for his statement insinuating that only those aligned to BN have received the RM500 aid under the BR1M scheme.

She referred to the Hansard for Phee's statement on May 2, pointing out that the DAP leader was wrong because such assistance has been handed out to all Malaysians since January.

Phee, who was obviously upset, argued that he had only referred to the case of a 'dato' who had received the payment, and denied having said only those aligned to BN had benefitted from the handout.

"Even this you cannot understand, (so) how to be a lawmaker?" he said, demanding that Jahara withdraws her accusation and apologises for it.

### **Claim withdrawn**

Jahara, a former state exco, replied that Phee had insinuated this in his statement.

"There are many ways to make an accusation. He insinuated it. He keeps saying he did not say it but actually he did. He has confused the rakyat," she said.

Abdul Halim then adjourned the proceedings to deliberate on the matter.

When the sitting resumed, Abdul Halim confirmed that, after checking with the Hansard, Phee had not made the alleged statement.

He requested Jahara to withdraw her statement which she reluctantly did, saying "if you decide so...".

Abdul Halim reminded her that invoking a Standard Order is a serious matter and that representatives should have proof of any matter before making allegations, "or it can only cause divisions" in the House.

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