

## **Umno open to probe on its communist links, says VP**

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**By Nigel Aw**

Rural and Regional Development Minister Mohd Shafie Apdal today said Umno was open to investigations on claims by PAS vice president Mahfuz Omar's claim that the party had ties with communists.

"We are open (to investigation). We do not have immunity against being investigate, if there are indeed elements or information that says there is something that would threaten the security of this country.

"No parties have immunity. This includes Umno and our (BN partners). If there is such a thing (as communist links), there is no problem (for a probe)," he told a press conference after officiating the 1Malaysia Bubur Lambuk event at the New Straits Times Press (NSTP) headquarters in Bangsar today.

However Shafie stressed that any investigation must have its basis.

"To investigate or not, that is important. But it has to be based on facts and not just hearsay that is played up but which has no truth to it," he said.

Yesterday Mahfuz engaged in a tit-for-tat in Harakahdaily by accusing Umno of being infiltrated by communists, after Police Special Branch this week claimed that PAS and DAP had been infiltrated by Jemaah Islamiah (JI) terrorists and communists respectively.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng also chipped in, pointing out that Umno Youth had in 2009 set up a permanent secretariat to strengthen ties between BN Youth and the Communist Youth League of China (CYL).

On Thursday, Special Branch assistant director Mohd Sofian Md Makinuddin claimed that the opposition was being infiltrated by terrorists who were trying to be fielded as candidates in the next general election.

However, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein on Friday said he was unsure about the claim as he had not received reports on the matter.

He further downplayed the issue yesterday saying that from what he has gathered, the matter was not a threat to national security, and evaded questions on whether he was in possession of any hard evidence of the Special Branch's claims.

Shafie (left) brushed off the tit-for-tat accusations, adding that the matter should be left to the authorities.

"Allegations about the general election being infiltrated, this is at an early stage. We do not see this as a small matter or something that can be ignored.

"If it concerns national security, more investigations should be done. But we do not label (anyone), I don't think it's right at this point of time," he said.

'No water conspiracy'

On a separate manner, Shafie denied allegations that the federal government and Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas) were manufacturing a water crisis in Selangor to arm-twist the state to accept the RM8.9 billion Langat 2 water treatment plant project.

"This is not propaganda but a fact that is happening in places in Selangor... We have identified the problem, and to solve it (there is a need) for a new water treatment plant.

"It would cost less than RM10 billion and the state government does not require much investment. See this rationally, it is not driven by political ideology but for the interest of the people," he said.

Syabas recently announced plans to implement water rationing in Selangor, citing that its back up supply of treated water was already at a low level.

This prompted the Selangor government to accuse Syabas of mismanaging water resources, pointing out that the company had an overflowing supply of raw water.

The state government is opposed the RM8.9 billion water treatment plant project and has instead advocated the solution of reducing Syabas' non-revenue water (NRW), which stands at a whopping 32 percent.