

Trouble brewing in Umno Bayan Baru division

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By Susan Loone

Trouble is brewing in the Bayan Baru Umno division, with the two top leaders in the division at loggerheads over a local development cooperative.

NONEThe two are division chairperson Abdul Rahim Saibu and his deputy Mansor Musa (left).

Today, Mansor, who is Koperasi Tunas Muda Sungai Ara Bhd chairperson, is giving Rahim 14 days to apologise for his "malicious statement to undermine the image" of the cooperative.

"We want him to apologise publicly to all the members of the koperasi and if he fails to do it by 14 days, we will not hesitate to take legal action against him," Mansor told a press conference today.

He was responding to Rahim's statement, as reported by Utusan Malaysia on Sept 8, in which Rahim he questioned the transparency of Koperasi Tunas Muda Sungai Ara in awarding project tenders to developers.

NONERahim (seated centre in picture) said there was no open tender system under the cooperative and it appeared as if the tenders were being monopolised by certain developers.

He said the cooperative was set up and given to Tunas Muda as a "deposit" for the Malays in the state.

"If all the koperasi land is pawned and developed, what is left for the Malays?" Rahim asked.

Open secret

Mansor also said that it has been known for a month that he would be openly challenging Abdul Rahim for the Bayan Baru division chief's post. Umno division elections are planned for Oct 19.

Mansor said it was an open secret that he does not have a good relationship with Rahim.

"This has nothing to do with any party or factional fight. We cannot agree because of Rahim's style of leadership. He is not a team player," he said.

The friction between the two began when Mansor was fielded as candidate for the Batu Maung state seat in the last general election.

Rahim had been eyeing the seat since both of them assumed their leadership roles in the Bayan Baru Umno division in 2008.

Rahim said he will not be withdrawing his statement against the koperasi, nor does his statement have anything to do with the division elections.

"I feel I have not said anything wrong so there is nothing for me to withdraw," he added when contacted.

Meanwhile, Mansor explained that the koperasi, formed in 1966, is not monopolised by Malays alone.

He noted that out of the 1,334 members of the koperasi, 30 percent are Chinese and Indians.

"Our tender process gets our members' approval. Non-members have no right to know about it. We have internal auditors to ensure the process is proper," he said.

"Abdul Rahim actually has no locus standi to comment about this issue," he said.

Mansor said the 1,007 acre of land owned by the koperasi in Sungai Ara, was not "a gift" (anugerah) but was acquired through the members' contributions.

He added that the koperasi developed its land to improve the economy of its members, who are mostly 65 years and above

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