

Azhar kicks sand in Penang CM's face
Malaysiakini.com
July 19, 2010

Penang opposition leader and state Umno chief Azhar Ibrahim has wasted no time in joining the fray over Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's war of words with a state development officer - under the federal government - over alleged sand theft in Balik Pulau.

NONEAzhar (right) accused the CM of being too green to understand the duties of civil service officers.

"Lim has gone overboard for criticising state development officer Nik Ali Mat Yunus for merely carrying out his duties," he said at a press conference in Penang Umno headquarters today.

Azhar, who is also the Penang state assemblyperson, hit out at the Pakatan Rakyat government led by DAP for being "inexperienced" in handling issues related to the federal government within the state.

He said Lim failed to understand the role and duties of staff under the federal and state authorities.

"This is the first time in Malaysian politics that the state government has become embroiled in civil service matters," he added.

Officer victimised

Azhar was referring to Lim's alleged accusation that Nik Ali was responsible for the Chief Minister's tiff with Muhamad Farid Saad (Pulau Betong-BN) - who had first highlighted the illegal sand mining issue in the press - over who was responsible to tackle the investigation.

NONEBecause the alleged activities was taking place in federal land, Lim (right, in photo) had sought the cooperation of the state development officer, saying his government had difficulty investigating as the land came under the federal government's Department of Lands and Mines.

The Penang CM had subsequently accused Nik Ali of not cooperating with the state government on the matter, and had made scathing remarks on the officer's competence.

Nik Ali responded ticking off Lim's for being "rude", at the Umno press conference today.

Azhar said that the onus is now was on the state government to resolve the issue of the sand theft instead of washing their hands off the matter.

'State gov't should investigate'

Farid, who was also present at Umno's press conference today, lambasted Lim for being "enemies" with federal government officers in the state.

"Why does he have to use words that are insulting to the individuals concerned? This is the third time that he is labelling the staff with harsh words," he added.

NONE"I am very sad because the act of insulting civil servants had never happened before

this," he said.

The issue first surfaced recently when Farid claimed that sand thieves had struck at a plot in Kampung Kenanga, Balik Pulau, which had been earmarked for a government polytechnic.

Farid explained that he lodged a police report about the matter last week, and on Friday the police cordoned off the area concerned.

"The police have done their job. They have carried out their investigation immediately, but the honourable chief minister continues to blame others," he said.

"Lim should instead ask the state district office (under his government) to investigate, take the necessary action on the wrongdoers, let the people know what action has been taken and ensure us that they will continue to monitor the situation closely," he added.

NONEFarid said this would be his last statement to the press on the matter.

Investigation at last

The state Public Accounts Committee led by Dato Keramat assemblyperson Jagdeep Singh Deo (left) has also appointed Farid to sit on the investigation board for the sand theft case.

The committee will meet on Wednesday to discuss the scope of their work.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/137772>