

**Police urged to expedite probe into 'Friday sermon'**  
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The Pakatan Rakyat-led Penang government today called on the police to expedite its probe into allegations that Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng had his name replace that of the Agong in several mosques in the state during Friday prayers recently.

NONEDeputy chief minister I Mansor Othman (left) said in a statement that this is to safeguard the reputation of the imams, khatibs (preachers) and mosques that have been implicated by Umno leaders in their accusations against Lim.

"The issue of 'Guan Eng replacing the Agong' that has been raised by Umno needs to be ascertained as to its veracity or otherwise.

"This is because several mosque's (committees) in Penang are anxious after being hit with Umno's fitnah (slander) claiming they were involved in replacing the name of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong with the name of the chief minister," said the Penanti state assemblyperson.

"It is hoped that the police investigations can be concluded quickly so that such a sensitive issue as this is settled and to uphold the dignity of all the imams, khatibs and mosques in Penang," added Mansor.

He said further that it was "unjust or proper that mosques, imams and khatibs be dragged into Umno's wicked games merely to fulfill Umno's obsession with toppling the image of the Pakatan state government."

Mansor's remarks follow the announcement yesterday by Penang police chief Ayub Yaakob that a special team has been set up to probe the allegations against Lim.

NONEThe police were acting on two reports on the matter, made at the Butterworth and Tasek Gelugor police stations. Ayub said the police hope to complete their investigation next week.

On Thursday, Umno vice-president and Penang Umno Liaison Committee chairperson Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (right) claimed that the Agong's name was switched with Lim's name in the "doa" at several mosques in the Tasek Gelugor, Permatang Pauh and Jelutong areas.

Addressing the claims, Mansur reiterated his government's stand that the text prepared for the Friday prayers by the Penang Islamic Affairs Department (JAIPP) had never been modified to replace the Agong's name with Lim's.

Neither have their been any directive - verbal or written - for mosque officials to do so, he added.

"If there were any imam or khatib who had replaced the Agong's name with the chief minister's, it would be wrong and serious action should be taken.

NONE"Until now, no imam or khatib has admitted using the chief minister's (left) name in place of the Agong's as Umno alleges," said Mansor.

On the contrary, said Mansor, one Zakaria Ahmad who has been implicated has denied the

accusation.

"Actually, he (Zakaria) only said in his prayer that Allah guide Guan Eng towards embracing Islam, just as the Prophet Muhammad himself prayed for non-Muslims be guided to accepting Islam," he said.

"The state government is disappointed that Umno has violated the sanctity of the month of Ramadan with such accusations and levelled such fitnah against the Penang government.

"Up until today, Umno cannot show any evidence that JAIPP had prepared a text for the Friday prayers that replaced the Agong's name with the chief minister's.

"Neither JAIPP nor the chief minister himself has issued an verbal or written order to any mosque or surau to use the name of the chief minister."

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