



Azhar: Guan Eng lied about using gambling money

**Malaysiakini.com
September 27, 2010**

Penang opposition leader Azhar Ibrahim has accused the state government of lying about using money from gambling sources to support programmes for the hardcore poor, which

included the state's Muslim community.

Azhar (*right*) said Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng was often "twisting his words" about such matters until proof was provided by the alleging party.

When Umno Youth Information chief Reezal Merican Naina Merican provided proof that the state had used such money to fund programmes for the poor, Lim quickly admitted to it but said it was used only for the non-Malays, added Azhar.

The Penang assembly person was referring to a recent expose by Reezal Merican in Kepala Batas where he produced a letter issued to the director of the Penang Turf Club regarding a balance of contribution of RM500,000.

According to Reezal Merican, the letter dated July 9 signed by Lim's private secretary Farida Hani M Yacob confirmed that the contribution had been collected by the state.

The Umno Kepala Batas youth chief said he received the letter from an unknown source in Kuala Lumpur and was highlighting the issue as it has caused anxiety to the Muslim community.

"This is his style; he will initially deny something, then when you show him the proof, he will admit it," Azhar told *Malaysiakini* when asked to comment about the matter.

"Remember, Lim (*right*) had also complained that he was not given a VIP seat at a Penang Hill function last year?" he asked.

"But when the photos of him sitting on a VIP chair were published, he blamed the press," he added.

Azhar was referring to an incident which surfaced during the height of Lim's tussle with federal government-appointed state development officer Nik Ali Nik Yunus, whom the chief minister dubbed a "Little Napoleon" who is out to undermine the Penang Pakatan administration.

Charges denied

Lim, who is DAP national secretary-general, however, has denied the charges, saying he had not fussed about the matter.

Lim is being criticised again by Umno for recently admitting that the state used funds derived from gambling sources for the state's hardcore poor.

But he gave an assurance that the money was confined only for the non-Muslim poor.



"We don't even know if the money was from horse racing betting. I don't know because the state has never approved gambling licences," he said.

"Only the federal government has approved such licences, so why not ask them?" he added in his speech at a sports carnival in Penang on Saturday.

Earlier, a blogger who posted an article on *Pisau.net* alleged that the RM100 awarded to the elderly over 60 years in its senior citizens appreciation programme was also derived from gambling sources.

Lim had vehemently denied the charge, while his political secretary and Komtar assemblyperson Ng Wei Aik (*right*) had since lodged a report against the blogger to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

(Northern branch).

"RM100 for the senior citizens is an anti-corruption dividend. This state government is not corrupt which is why it can give money to the people," Lim had said.

But an unconvinced Azhar said Lim was the kind of person who often lied about his work.

He urged the chief minister to come clean over the recent allegations that gambling money was used for the hardcore poor Muslim communities.

He also questioned how the state could differentiate the money used for Malays and non-Malay communities.

"Lim has to clarify all these allegations; how does he differentiate the money used to fund programmes for the Malay and non-Malay communities?" he asked.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/143704>