

State Umno chief slams Lim over graft allegations

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Report claims Penang CM insinuated Zainal Abidin had swindled RM1.1m

STATE Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Zainal Abidin Osman yesterday hit out at Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng for insinuating that he had swindled RM1.1 million allocation meant for the poor in the state in 2009.

Zainal Abidin, who is also rural and regional development ministry adviser, said Lim had accused him of mishandling the allocation by channelling the fund to a charitable organisation here.

He said Lim had insinuated that he (Zainal Abidin) was involved in a corrupt practice when addressing a crowd at a Chinese New Year dinner in George Town as reported by a vernacular daily on Thursday.

Zainal Abidin, who is also Nibong Tebal Barisan Nasional division chairman, dared Lim to visit the ministry's office to scrutinise the report and the names of more than 300 recipients who had benefited from the programme.

"The money was also channelled to the poor and hardcore poor families in the state through various programmes organised by the ministry in 2009," he said.

Among the programmes were income enhancement, skills and career training, education, supplement diet programme, children nursery and distribution of Amanah Saham Sejahtera.

He said the ministry had approved an additional RM11 million for Penang that year and the money was channelled to more than 600 people to repair their dilapidated houses and build new homes for poor families.

"This is a serious allegation by a chief minister who happened to be a chartered accountant," he said after handing over aid to 200 Maktab Rendah Sains Mara students in Transkrian here yesterday.

He said Lim went on telling people that he had given RM50,000 each to 22 people here.

"This is totally absurd."

Zainal Abidin said he had earlier refused to entertain Lim's allegations but decided to counter them after Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general, raised the issue again.

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