

Government Backbencher Defends Purchase Of New Executive Jet
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 (Bernama) -- A government backbencher today defended the purchase of a new executive jet as claimed by the Opposition in the social media.

Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim (BN-Baling) said the purchase of the executive jet was to ensure the safety of the country's leader while making visits at home and abroad.

"The aircraft is not owned by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak but is owned by the government," he said when debating the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's opening address in the Dewan Rakyat here.

Abdul Azeez said the purchase of the new aircraft can reduce the cost of operation, management and maintenance of the existing AC319 executive jet.

Rafizi Ramli (PKR-Pandan) had claimed that the prime minister had bought a new executive jet.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said the Airbus Corporate Jetliner (ACJ320) was purchased to replace the 16 year-old Boeing Business Jet (BBJ).

The PMO said the government purchased the ACJ320 via hire purchase contract for 15 years and the BBJ will be disposed to finance the purchase of the ACJ320.

Meanwhile, Datuk Ahmad Jazlan Yaakub (BN-Machang) urged the Kelantan state government to stop the issuance of licences for projects in rural areas.

The move is to avoid a repeat of the mud flood last year due to excessive clearing of land in rural areas.

"Kelantan suffered losses of about RM1 billion due to the mud flood," he added.

The debate continues on Monday.

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