

Is Anwar right about Shafee's meddling, DAP asks PM
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Question raised over involvement of lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah must be confirmed or denied, says Lim Kit Siang.

PETALING JAYA: DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang agrees with Anwar Ibrahim on the question of lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah's likely involvement in the extension of chief justice Md Raus Sharif and Court of Appeal president Zulkefli Ahmad Makinudin's respective tenures.

Yesterday, Anwar had in a statement claimed he had received information that Shafee had played an integral role in the extensions.

"I understand that Shafee was involved in preparing the legal viewpoint and basis to decide on Raus and Zulkefli's extension of service.

"In view of this, Najib must immediately confirm if this is true or otherwise," the PKR defacto leader said.

Lim concurred with Anwar, urging Najib to come clean on the matter, which he said also put Shafee's earlier comments on the controversial extensions in a different light.

"If this is true, then Shafee's comments supporting the move is self-serving and lacking in the candour and professionalism expected of a senior and prominent lawyer," the Gelang Patah MP said.

On Saturday, Shafee commented on the late-night announcement last Friday on the extension of Raus' tenure as chief justice and Zulkefli as Court of Appeal president for another three years and two years, respectively.

"Almost everyone thought Raus recommended himself and Zulkefli to be extended as 'additional judges' under Article 122(1A) of the Federal Constitution.

"He did not. The former CJ (Arifin Zakaria) on the verge of retiring, and possibly in one of his last official acts, recommended both judges to be appointed 'additional judges'.

"The former CJ must have felt bad about this 'flash in the pan' tenure as compared with his, which was more than six years," Shafee had said.

Lim, who is DAP parliamentary leader, called for the Cabinet to demand the prime minister to make a full declaration on the issue at its weekly meeting tomorrow.

“The cabinet should ensure that the country is not plunged into another constitutional crisis over the judiciary, in particular over the important principles on the doctrine of separation of powers and an independent judiciary, on the eve of the country celebrating the 60th anniversary of Merdeka next month.”

He also called for Rauf and Zulkefli to simply decline their extension of service out of respect for the constitution, questioning their loyalty and integrity should they choose to remain instead.

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