

## **IT'S LIKE A POLITICAL PLOY — SHAFIE APDAL**

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**By admin-s**

(The Borneo Post) – Former Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal is of the opinion that a political ploy is afoot in trying to implicate him with the Sabah Water Department graft scandal.

“You know, when it comes to politics...maybe because I am already in the opposition, they are worried about what will happen, but whatever it is let the law prevail,” he said when asked why his former ministry was mentioned by Infrastructure Development Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan when he commented on the arrest of top two officers from the state Water Department.

Speaking at a press conference here yesterday, Shafie said that he was not accusing anyone of the crime and the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) should be allowed to carry out its investigations into the case.

He added that the two suspects are officers from the state government, not the federal government.

“I am not the one who appointed these officers and I don't even know them, I don't engage with them,” he said, while lamenting that the allegation made by Pairin was ‘unfounded and malicious’.

“I have known Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan for several decades now and regard him as a friend with a long tenure of administrative experience, and I was surprised that he had specifically made some malicious inference when he mentioned that the projects allegedly connected to the corruption scandal were awarded in 2010 during my tenure as minister of the Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

“What is even more surprising is that Tan Sri Pairin qualified his statement on the projects by specifically throwing malicious inferences that the projects were not handled by his ministry,” the Semporna member of parliament stressed.

Shafie, who denied all allegations and inferences of his or his former ministry's involvement in the corruption case which shocked Malaysians, found it quite perplexing and amusing that the state authorities and some in the social media were in haste in passing judgement.

“And in the case of the state minister (Pairin) had concocted his statement to plead his innocence publicly by diverting the ‘blame’ on the federal Rural and Regional Development ministry,” he said.

According to Shafie, all these ‘concocted statements’ were made during the time when the MACC's investigations were still going on, adding that by making such

statements publicly it appears to show that the state authorities have no respect nor the confidence on the process of the investigations by the MACC.

Commenting on Pairin's claim that the allocations for the RM3.3 billion federal projects had been channelled directly to the state Water Department, the former minister reckoned that the state government should be in the know as it involved a huge allocation.

In reply to a further question as to whether the state Finance Ministry would have been aware of the allocation, Shafie replied that they should know.

The allocation would not be channelled directly to the department, it must go through the state government, he said, adding that the federal ministry would discuss the matter with the state government and it follows that the state Finance Ministry should be in the know.

"But I find it strange, if the allocation was from the Rural and Regional Development Ministry, why was such a huge amount found in the Water Department? It is not logical. In the process of decision making, the tender is done by the federal but the money is found in the department," he said.

When asked why was the ministry was seemingly implicated in the case, Shafie replied: "I am not sure, you better ask him (Pairin). They have to spell out how they came to that conclusion. I mean if the allocation comes from the federal government, it does not mean it was only from the Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

"It can come from the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry and we know who the minister is from 2008, and we also know who is the deputy minister. Also, the allocation could have come from the Prime Minister's Department through the ICU, which had channelled RM1 billion to Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

"They need to spell out what are the projects the RM3.3 billion was allocated for. What is important is to allow MACC to deal with it... how the money had been siphoned to the magnitude of hundred million ringgit," he added.

Shafie reiterated that he too would like to get to the bottom of the alleged scandalous acts of corruption by the officers of the state Water Department.

He said that he is willing to cooperate and give his assistance to MACC in any manner relating to his former ministry.

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