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PASSING THE BUCK

Stop blaming DoE, Wan Junaidi tells Guan Eng

KUALA LUMPUR: Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng should not pass the buck to the Department of Environment (DoE) about the landslide tragedy at the affordable high-rise housing project in Tanjung Bungah.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar slammed Lim for putting the blame on the DoE for not requesting an environmental impact assessment (EIA).

“Under the Federal Constitu-

tion, land and change of land use are state matters. All communication of that nature of the letter dated Jan 23, 2015, from the DoE to the state, is considered advice and we cannot go against it.

“The DoE had said it did not agree with the approval of the project’s planning. But, if the Penang government had chosen to ignore, then, there is nothing much we could do.

“As for the EIA, the state government is supposed to request to the DoE if a project’s approval

was not given. The DoE did not give an approval.”

Yesterday, Lim said the law only required the state to adhere to the EIA and that DoE did not request for an EIA to be conducted.

He said if there was a request for an EIA, the state would have complied with it.

He reiterated that both the state government and the local authority had abided by all laws to approve the 50-storey affordable housing project in Tanjung Bungah.

The landslide on Saturday morning killed 11 workers, including a Malaysian, while injuring three others.

Since then, the Penang Island City Council mayor Datuk Maimunah Mohd Sharif had admitted that the DoE had rejected the application.

However, a collective decision was made to approve the application during a One-Stop Centre committee meeting on Feb 18, 2015, which involved more than 20 federal and state agencies.