Background of person appointed as ESSCom DG irrelevant — Yusof

LAHAD Datu assemblyman Datuk Yusof Apdal objected to Klias assemblyman Datuk Lajim Ukin’s call to replace the present ESSCom director general with a uniformed personnel of at least a two-star rank.

Yusof said having a uniformed personnel assuming the post would not guarantee the effective implementation of duties as a director general.

“What is necessary for the efficiency of the director general is a more structured and clear administrative structure. The government needs to study the structure of ESSCom presently and to explain the jurisdiction given to the director general as well as equip the body with the necessary assets to effectively carry out its operation,” he said at the state assembly yesterday.

Yusof said the background of the person appointed as the director general of ESSCom was irrelevant.

“What the Yang Berhormat from Klias has forgotten or deliberately forgotten is that the ministers responsible for the Home Ministry and Defence Ministry are civilians,” he said.

He said ESSCom comprise members from agencies such as the Royal Malaysia Police, Malaysian Army and Maritime in addressing security issues within ESSZone.

“However, this does not encompass the power involving district police stations, marine and army bases within ESSZone,” he said.

“Directives are still being made by the district police chief with the blessing from the State Police Commissioner and brigade commander. It is here that the confusion and contradiction in the overall operation of ESSCom could be seen,” he said.

Yusof also welcomed the State Government’s recent announcement to make it compulsory for every worker at resorts to be registered and screened by ESSCom and the Tourism, Culture and Environment Ministry.

He also proposed that the enforcement involving the issuance of licences and permits for the operation of resorts and tourism activities must be strengthened and monitored continuously.

“I believe that if all the resorts scattered around ESSZone adhered to the government conditions and regulations, the kidnapping incident might have been avoided,” he said.

Yusof noted that 25 illegal workers were nabbed at the Singgahmata Resort where the recent kidnapping took place. Six more illegal workers were nabbed working for three resorts surrounding the Sulu sea.

“This is proof that the resort operators have deliberately ignored the security factors and are only concerned about profit. They continue to employ illegal immigrants even though they have been warned by ESSCom,” he said.

Yusof also said educational institutes focusing on the security sector should be established in Lahad Datu.

According to him, the institutes that can be considered for establishment in Lahad Datu are Police Academy, Military College, PULAPOL, PULADA, Marine Academy, Oceanography College and Nursing College.

The district also welcomes Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Sabah Foundation University College, universities and religious training centres, he said.
From left, Luyang assemblyman Dr Hiew King Cheu in discussion with Lahad Datu assemblyman Dato' Mohammad Yusof Apdal and Elopura assemblyman Au Kam Wah before the start of State Assembly sitting yesterday.