

**CM: Bayan Mutiara allegations 'a pack of lies'**  
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Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has described allegations of wrongdoing over the tender award for the Bayan Mutiara mixed development project by the Penang Development Corporation (PDC) as “a pack of lies”.

The 103-acre project, located on prime land to the south of the Penang bridge, was awarded to developer Ivory Properties Group Berhad, which is joint-venturing with a company said to have links with family members of Berjaya Group tycoon Vincent Tan.

Questions about the deal arose when Lim recently handed over a mock cheque for RM500 million to PDC, the state development agency, to build the first phase of 11, 800 affordable homes in Batu Kawan.

Social activist Anil Netto, on his blog, asked if the presentation of the mock cheque was merely an “election stunt”.

It is learnt that PDC, of which Lim is chairperson, has yet to receive the payment for the land from Ivory Properties, and queries arose about where the RM500 million came from.

When asked, Lim (left) said the developer had handed over the first payment of RM20 million, and the remaining money, which adds up to RM1.1 billion for the parcel of land, will be settled in five years.

When asked from where the state had obtained the RM500 million to pay the PDC for the homes, Lim said the money came from the state's coffers.

“The state government has the money, after all there is a surplus in its coffers every year. It is not a problem to pay the amount,” he told reporters in Komtar today.

It is learnt that Ivory Properties had also managed to get approval from Bursa Saham to defer its second payment for three months, until May.

Lim said the extension was only for two months and that the developer was liable to pay interest due to the delay in payment.

CM's enemies have 'run out of capital'

Meanwhile, Lim said his enemies have “run out of capital”, and have stooped to attack him over petty issues, even those related to an open tender system.

The PDC, he noted, managed to secure the highest bid - RM240 per square foot (psf) when the market price for the land was not even RM150 psf.

“Who else is willing to pay that much? It is an open competitive tender, how can they say it is cheaper? I don't ever sell anything cheap,” he said.

“How many parties can come up with RM1.1 billion? Of course, we ensure that they have the proper financial backing, too, because there is no point for them to say they can come up with the money, but have no real financial backing,” he added.

Lim insisted that the deal was processed in a “transparent and accountable” manner.

When asked why the price of the land was lower than that for the other parcels of land, Lim said that one must not compare “apples with oranges”.

#### Singapore consultants appointed

On a related matter, Lim also announced the signing of a letter of commitment to appoint Surbana International Consultants (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd to create the concept and designs for the Batu Kawan public housing project, named Bandar Cassia.

Surbana has been providing Singapore’s Housing and Development Board with consultancy services for its public housing projects for 50 years.

On the political repercussions over the appointment of a Singapore-related consultant for the homes, Lim said he was aware that he might be attacked for the decision.

Former Selangor PAS executive councillor Hasan Ali, who was sacked from PAS, had accused the DAP of colluding with Singapore’s People’s Action Party to merge Malaysia with its neighbour to form a republic, which the party had vehemently denied.

Lim shot back at his adversaries over their “double-standard” criticisms, saying that the willingness of Singaporean companies to invest or trade with Malaysia only meant there was “investor confidence”.

“If Singapore companies go to the Iskandar development project in Johor, it is not a problem, but if they came to Penang, it is a big issue,” he said.

“These are political games played in a very unhealthy manner and smack of double standards” he added.

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