

Gerakan raps Guan Eng over Mercedes purchase

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Gerakan has turned the table on Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, chiding him for purchasing a Mercedes S300L when he criticised Terengganu for doing the same.

The party's deputy secretary general Dr Thor Teong Ghee said Lim had previously slammed Terengganu's purchase of the luxurious cars, saying it was "not thrifty".

"This clearly shows that Lim and the state government does not practice what they preach," said Thor (left) in a statement today.

"The state is not prudent in its spending. Furthermore, the state should practise clean and good governance and should not receive any discount as this may be misconstrued as favouritism," said Thor.

"Excepting any rebates from businessmen maybe at the expense of Penangites as there are no free lunches," he added.

Thor was referring to Lim's comment in 2008 when Terengganu bought 14 of the E200 Kompressor cars at RM3.43 million to replace their Proton Perdanas in a move to "cut costs".

Lim said when he criticised Terengganu, he was under the impression that the state government bought it without tax exemptions.

It is learnt that Terengganu purchased the cars with tax exemptions.

"How come Terengganu can get tax exemptions and we cannot? We got it only for one car," Lim told reporters after attending Penang Development Corporation's Christmas do.

"I don't understand. CMs in other states also bought Mercedes cars but no one makes an issue of this. No matter how many times I explain, I would still be hammered for this" he lamented, adding that he would accept the people's criticisms.

'56 percent discount'

Lim then went on to explain that the car does not belong to him but to the state.

He added that even after he retires from his post as chief minister, the car would remain in Penang, adding that if there were no discount and tax exemption, the state government would not have considered buying the car.

"This purchase is value for money as we got a 56 percent discount. In the long run, the maintenance cost is better and there is a question of leg room," said Lim, who is DAP secretary-general.

Lim also explained that the state did not consider the purchase of E250 model although it is roomy as the cost would be about RM355,000 per car after tax deduction.

"You keep on asking me the same questions. People buy planes, how come they are not questioned?" He asked, referring to jet planes used by Prime Minister Najib Razak, his wife Rosmah Mansor and his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin.

On Tuesday, Penang financial officer Mokhtar Mohd Jait explained that the state received a hefty discount and tax exemptions on the purchase, bringing the total bill for Penang ratepayers down to RM298,263.75.

Mokhtar said this was similar to the Mercedes Benz S320L used by former Penang chief minister Koh Tsu Koon, which was purchased on Sept 4, 1995 at RM271,331.22.

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