

**Guan Eng welcomes MACC probe on Merc
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Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng continues to battle public queries on his latest purchase of a Mercedes-Benz for official use by welcoming any proposed investigation by the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC).

"Whether MACC will eventually investigate or not, full cooperation will be given to the commission as the state government is clean and I have nothing to hide," said Lim at a press conference today.

"I will not be asking MACC why no investigation was conducted on BN governments who made similar purchases without the 55 percent discount," he quipped.

"I am certain that MACC will find that the Penang government is as clean as a whistle as the whole transaction of purchasing the Mercedes Benz was handled by the state financial officer Mokhtar Mohd Jait, who has abided by proper and legal procedures with valid documentation," he added.

Lim was responding to a report in news portal FZ.com yesterday, quoting sources that claimed the commission has started a probe on the state's purchase of the 2012 Mercedes-Benz S300L.

The report alleged that MACC is trying to establish a link between the purchase from Lowe Motors Sdn Bhd and tycoon Tan Kok Ping, who is believed to have a stake in the company.

Tan has often been accused of having a "privileged relationship" with the state, and especially with Lim, however when the former's company, General Accomplishment Sdn Bhd, was charged RM30,000 by the court for illegal clearing on Bukit Relau, the CM had appealed for a higher sentence to punish the culprits.

A source within MACC told Malaysiakini that no such probe has been initiated, while the commission has denied that it had issued any statement regarding the matter.

Lim and Mokhtar have strongly defended the purchase of the car, but the chief minister has been labelled a hypocrite as he had previously criticised the Terengganu government for buying 14 Mercedes E200 at RM 245,000 totalling RM3.43 million, in 2008.

"I criticised them because they were not value for money. They did not get a 55 percent discount for the 14 Mercedes, unlike the 55 percent discount obtained by the Penang government when purchasing one Mercedes Benz," Lim later explained.

Probed for saving public money?

Lim said only in Malaysia will buying a car with a 55 percent discount and saving public monies be worthy of being probed by the MACC.

However, it is not worthy of investigation when buying at higher than market price and wasting public funds, Lim mocked.

The state government was dragged into the spotlight when it bought the Mercedes Benz S300L for RM298,263.75, at a 55 percent or RM358,954.25 discount and with tax exemption from the original price of RM657,218.00.

Lim mocked further that he is not surprised that MACC would probe the state government for saving money amounting to RM 358,954.25 while letting off those who buy at marked-up prices, as exposed in the annual Auditor-General's Reports.

He cited the latest 2012 Auditor-General's Report that exposed malpractices involving at least RM6.5 billion, including wastage of public monies.

Lim then rapped the MACC for not acting on such wastage of public funds that involves a BN government, but takes a different approach when public monies are saved by a Pakatan Rakyat government.

"This is really Malaysia Boleh!" Lim exclaimed.

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