

Reps deny impropriety over house purchase
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A rumour going around town about three DAP leaders purchasing homes worth about RM600,000 raises the question again about the need for Pakatan Rakyat representatives to declare their assets publicly to avoid suspicions about their wealth accumulation.

However the leaders involved have come out to clarify that no wrongdoing was involved.

Questions still abound as to whether the state assemblypersons have received favours in the form of discounts from developers when making their purchase.

wong hon wai ala wang han weiBut one of the reps involved, Air Itam state assemblyperson Wong Hon Wai (right), clarified that he had purchased his house legitimately and complied with all the necessary legal procedures when buying his house in July last year.

"There is no fraud and no discount (to purchase the property)," he said.

Wong, who is Penang exco member for Town and Country Planning, Housing and Arts, told Malaysiakini in jest that: "...journalists will be disappointed that this will not become a scandal".

"This is a minor issue, it's old news. You do not expect me to suddenly announce to the world that I am going to sign a sale and purchase agreement today," said Wong, a lawyer by profession.

Wong said he has yet to move into his new home, adding that the housing estate in which his house stands was approved before March 2008 when the BN government was still in power.

He added that he does not know the developer, and that Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has been informed about the matter.

"When public figures purchase property, it is difficult to avoid suspicion but of course I took extra care when doing it," he said.

Election promise

Public declaration of assets was an election promise that the PR government in Penang has yet to honour although the various state assembly reps claimed that they have revealed their possessions to Lim, who is also DAP national secretary general.

The Penang government under Lim has been criticised by opposition parties Umno, Gerakan and MCA and civil society groups for not fulfilling one of its election promises in the party's manifesto.

Lim, however, justified the delay, saying he was concerned about security issues and the proper format to make the declarations possible.

NONEMeanwhile, another rep embroiled in the controversy, Sungai Pinang assemblyperson Koid Teng Guan (left), said he was still "searching" for a home, and has not purchased one yet.

He said not many of the reps were planning to buy property, only himself, Wong and Tanjong parliamentarian Chow Kon Yeow.

"But I'm not sure whether the other two have already started paying their instalments," he said.

Chow, who is state exco member for housing, traffic management and local government, is currently in Russia and cannot be contacted.

Koid said that he, like the other state assemblypersons, could not afford to buy the house in cash and needed to apply for a bank loan to settle the payment.

"I have to get a bank loan of 90 percent, and this will involve negotiations with the banks."

Koid assured reporters that once he has decided to purchase a home, he would submit details of his property purchase to the chief minister to avoid further speculation about his financial situation.

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