

PM: Lim did not revoke Yayasan Al-Bukhary's tax exemption

ALLEGATIONS that Lim Guan Eng had revoked Yayasan Al-Bukhary's tax exempt status while he was Finance Minister are untrue, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said that under Subsection 44(6) of the Income Tax Act, the discretion to revoke tax exemptions rests with the Inland Revenue Board director-general.

"The fact is that the approval was made on Feb 25, 2021, which is an approval (for tax exemption) that is unprecedented, involving Yayasan Al-Bukhary and the Al-Bukhary Group," he said during Prime Minister Question Time (PMQT) in Parliament yesterday.

Cha Kee Chin (PH-Rasah) asked

whether Lim had cancelled the tax exemption for Yayasan Al-Bukhary between May 2018 and February 2020.

On March 11, Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin claimed that Lim had decided to reapply taxation and place a 45% penalty tax on Yayasan Al-Bukhary in 2018.

Muhyiddin claimed that Yayasan Al-Bukhary had appealed to him as the eighth prime minister to be exempt from taxes for work related to Islamic charities.

On his part, Lim remains adamant that Muhyiddin must apologise by the end of yesterday for slandering him with regard to Yayasan Al-Bukhary.

"He (Muhyiddin) must retract and apologise, failing which, further action will be taken and not just merely civil action," Lim told reporters at a press conference in the Parliament media centre yesterday.

"As previously stated, I had never seen the file or directed that the tax exemption for the foundation be revoked," he said, adding that Muhyiddin had maliciously slandered him to gain political support.

Meanwhile, Cha said there were accusations that the Prime Minister was "against poor people", and he asked for a clarification from Anwar.

In response, Anwar said the pres-

ent government's views were different from those of the previous administration.

"Before this, big companies were given tax exemptions after donating to parties.

"I chose to speak to tycoon Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary to support projects that benefit the country and donate directly to poor padi farmers.

"RM60mil and 30% of profits were given to padi farmers. So there's a difference here; one can choose to donate to a party, and another can choose to donate to padi farmers. I chose the latter," added Anwar.

In a brief statement on March 18, Syed Mokhtar said he was against

anyone associating him with any political parties.

In December last year, Anwar said he spoke to Syed Mokhtar about the latter's perceived monopoly of rice imports through Bernas.

Meanwhile, Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man (PN-Kubang Kerian) asked whether other companies that made windfall profits would also be asked to donate to the poor.

Anwar said the current government had a list of 60 local and multinational companies that had given a commitment to fund TVET training, and these companies include the Sunway Group and Berjaya Group, among others.