

Back up Economist claims or say sorry, Guan Eng tells BN man
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 — Kota Belud MP Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan must show proof The Economist was paid to write favourably about opposition-led Penang's economic revival or apologise, Lim Guan Eng has said.

The Penang chief minister said Abdul Rahman's "wild allegations" on micro-blogging site Twitter had "diminished the hard work" of 1.6 million Penangites who successfully arrested and reversed the decline of the state economy over the past 18 years.

"Instead of trying to compete with Penang PR (Pakatan Rakyat) on ideas, BN is trying to sabotage our efforts with vicious lies. I wish to remind BN that PR does not engage in such dishonest practices like some federal government leaders in buying off journalists for favourable reviews," he said in a statement today.

"And not everyone can be bought, certainly not The Economist. As the most reputable economic magazine in the world, BN's allegations of PR buying off The Economist... has no credibility whatsoever."

On Tuesday, Abdul Rahman retweeted and replied to a comment made by user @satD, who asked Lim and DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang how much they had paid the London-based weekly magazine to write "Getting back its mojo".

"As usual. Must must read! RT @satD: @cmlinguaneng @limkitsiang how much u paid Economist 4 D Mojo Advertorial?" the message by the BN Backbenchers Club vice president read.

The article, which appeared in last week's edition of The Economist, highlighted Penang's reinvention from a low-cost manufacturing hub for electronics giants into a nascent regional centre for research and development.

The magazine pointed out that although Penang's revival was already underway in 2008, Guan Eng's policies "helped it along", and highlighted his administration's dismantling of the patronage system under BN in favour of an open tender system.

The Economist also pointed out: "Adapted to the national stage, such policies could transform the way that the Malaysian federal government conducts business... These policies are popular, and the assault on corruption pleases foreign investors."

Guan Eng added today that Umno was unhappy praise was being "heaped" on the opposition state government for successfully fighting graft and increasing transparency, which the DAP secretary-general credited with rejuvenating Penang's lacklustre economy.

"The concluding remarks by The Economist has caused much concern amongst BN supporters: 'Little wonder, then, that Penang has become a political weathervane as much as a lesson in economic development.'," he said.

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