

**Retire if no proof on land sale claims, Guan Eng tells Umno men**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 — Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng today called on two Umno leaders to retire from politics if they could not prove that state-owned land in Bayan Mutiara was not sold via open tender.

Lim accused Penang Umno chairman Datuk Zainal Abidin Osman and Umno parliamentary backbencher Datuk Abdul Rahman Datuk Dahlan of having "viciously" carried out a campaign of lies against his administration's sale of prime land in Bayan Mutiara, on the southeast side of the island.

"As for Umno's allegations that the sale was not done by open competitive tender, I am willing to retire from politics if Umno can prove so. Facts are facts which cannot be changed by lies. The open competitive tender of the Bayan Mutiara land was even advertised in the newspapers in 2010.

"If Datuk Zainal Abidin Osman and Datuk Abdul Rahman fail to prove that there was no open competitive tender, would they then dare to accept my challenge to retire from politics? The two Umno leaders should accept this challenge to prove that there are not engaging in a systematic campaign of lies to undermine and sabotage the state government's open competitive tender policy and affordable housing programme," Lim (picture) said in a statement.

He pointed out that the state government had managed to sell the land to the highest bidder at RM240 per square foot (psf) or RM1.07 billion despite the valuation by the Finance Ministry on November 5, 2009 saying the price of the land was RM65 psf.

The state government's reserve price, said Lim, was capped at RM200 psf.

"To date Umno and Abdul Rahman have not responded to my challenge to buy over the 102.3 acres at RM420 if that is the market price claimed by Umno. Umno should put their money where their mouth is by paying RM420 psf. If Umno or their cronies buy over at RM420 psf, the state government can get an extra RM800 million or RM1.87 billion instead of RM1.07 billion at RM240 psf," Lim added.

He said the RM500 million derived as profits from the sale of the Bayan Mutiara land would be used for affordable housing both on the mainland and the island. The first project, he said, is in Batu Kawan, comprising 12,000 units on 200 acres built over 10 years.

"To ensure that there is quality affordable housing for the poor, the state government has decided to appoint the best instead of merely imitating the best. For this reason HDB Singapore, widely acknowledged as providing the best affordable housing in Asia if not the world, was chosen.

"HDB Singapore was chosen for their expertise in design, planning, implementation and management... For this reason, the state government regrets the actions by Umno to racialise the issue, asking why Malaysians cannot do the job but instead we have to go to

Singapore," he added.

Abdul Rahman has claimed he has proof that the state-owned land in Bayan Mutiara had been sold cheaply without tender, based on Ivory Properties Groups Bhd's submission to Bursa Malaysia.

He also alleged that the Bayan Mutiara land was sold below the market price given by property valuer Henry Butcher.

"Henry Butcher valued the land at RM1.079 billion, but it was sold at RM1.072 billion, lower than the appraised price," said the Sabah Umno leader.

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