

Keep light on BN's 'excessive' spending, Guan Eng tells Pakatan
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 26 — Lim Guan Eng said today the economy and Putrajaya's alleged profligacy would be key election issues, and urged Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to keep exposing the government's debts.

The DAP secretary-general said a continued spotlight on Barisan Nasional's (BN) spendthrift ways will help deny the ruling coalition a two-thirds parliamentary majority in the next election, expected to be called soon.

"Unless PR exposes BN's cover-up of [deficit, debt and deceit], not only will PR not win power in Putrajaya but may even face a disastrous 13th general election that will enable BN to win back its two-thirds majority," he said in a statement.

Lim pointed out that BN knew that cost of living and its handling of the economy would be major election issues and were working hard to "deceive" the public into thinking the "menace of corruption" has not badly affected the nation's finances.

He said the government's budget deficit estimates of 5.6, 5.4 and 4.7 per cent from 2010 to 2012 were "way too low" as they underestimated operating expenditure and overestimated economic expansion.

Budget deficit for this year will be higher than the estimated 4.7 per cent due to BN's "determined efforts to buy votes" with cash handouts and the civil service wage hike, he claimed.

"Unlike PR state governments that provide social assistance from budget surpluses achieved for every four years it is in power, BN is giving cash handouts from budget deficits which have been incurred over the last 15 years," said the Bagan MP.

Lim said profligate borrowing was the reason government debt had increased to RM456 billion last year from RM266 million in 2007, but noted that this did not include contingent liabilities that would push total debt even higher.

"If contingent liabilities are included, our government debt exposure will increase by RM97 billion in 2010..." he said.

"Malaysians must remember that there is a day of reckoning for debts borrowed to be repaid. Ultimately, ordinary people are the ones to pay for all these debts particularly when Malaysia goes bankrupt."

Government debt in PR-helmed states like Penang, in comparison, fell by 95 per cent to RM30 million at end-2011 from RM630 million in 2008, he said.

Lim added he has picked DAP publicity chief Tony Pua to head a team of researchers who

will work closely with the party's election preparatory panel to ensure there is no let-up in exposés concerning BN's debts.

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