

**You too can be like Penang, Guan Eng tells Malaysia**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 1 — Lim Guan Eng has called on Malaysians to vote for Pakatan Rakyat (PR) if it wants to see Penang's success replicated in their states as speculation mounts of a general election this June.

The Penang chief minister brushed aside doubts over the federal opposition's election manifesto when it goes up against the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) in upcoming polls, calling on voters to judge the two coalitions according to their track records.

"Now we have a track record to show. Penang's record is topping investments for the first time in 50 years and then repeating it," he said when questioned why PR's polls pledges brought "nothing new."

Lim (picture) said that after PR has governed four states as a coalition, "it allows you to show your report card to the people."

"If you want to be as good as Penang, you must vote for us. See what we've done for Penang," the DAP secretary general told The Malaysian Insider in a recent interview.

Although he said "Selangor also has the same achievements" and the PKR-led state was a "safer state" for the coalition than Penang, Lim has repeatedly talked up the island's topping of national investment charts while reducing its debt and maintaining a surplus budget.

The state has won praise from international media including the Economist, Wall Street Journal and Singapore's Straits Times, which compare the DAP-led administration favourably against BN's federal government.

Penang attracted the most manufacturing investments of any state in Malaysia in both 2010 and 2011 with RM12.2 billion in 2010 and RM9.1 billion last year.

Lim has also claimed that Penang's public debt fell by 95 per cent to RM30 million at the end-2011 from RM630 million in 2008 with budget surpluses every year since taking office.

The Bagan MP also said in the interview that before ending BN's uninterrupted rule of Malaysia since Independence in 1957, "there must be a successful precursor."

"We have to show Penang to be a model of good governance, then people will be more confident of delivering support for a PR federal government," he said.

He offered other areas which George Town compared favourably to Putrajaya, such as social aid where it has dished out RM100 annually to senior citizens, single mothers, the disabled and school children in Primary 1 and 4 as well as Form 1 and 4.

"This is institutionalised social aid, not just once every five years but every year. BR1M

should be done every year, annualised and institutionalised," he said, referring to the Najib administration's Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia cash handouts this year.

Lim had previously called the RM500 given to households earning less than RM3,000 a month "a naked attempt to buy votes" as it was only offered prior to an election that must be called within the next 14 months.

PR has repeatedly talked up a "new deal" for voters and PKR especially has said that "as a reformist party, we cannot go into an election with the same old."

Although, PKR promises to put forward concrete ideas reforming higher education, land transport and the civil service in its manifesto it says will be ready by next month.

But the coalition's joint manifesto launched in January was a "marriage" of previous policies in its Common Policy Framework (CPF) and Buku Jingga policy, as described by PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli.

The coming elections will likely be the most keenly contested in history after PR made record gains in March 2008, winning 82 federal seats and denying BN its customary two-thirds supermajority in Parliament as well as taking power in five states.

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