

## **'Failed state' Penang pays higher Raya bonus, says Guan Eng**

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**By Nawar Firdaws**

### **Penang CM mocks the BN government as bad in managing the country's finances but exceptionally good at 'corruption and lies'.**

PETALING JAYA: Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has scoffed at Barisan Nasional's (BN) allegations that he is leading a failed state, citing as an example Penang's higher Raya bonus for civil servants compared to that awarded by Putrajaya.

He said Prime Minister Najib Razak had announced RM500 and RM250 as financial assistance to federal civil servants and pensioners, respectively, for the coming Raya celebration but Penang had handed out a minimum of RM1,000 per civil servant.

"That's double the bonus that the BN-led federal government is giving. So which one is a failed state?" he said at a media conference here today.

He was responding to a statement by BN's strategic communications team which claimed Penang was burdened by escalating debts and set to become a failed state.

The BN team said Penang's annual operating expenses had steadily increased every year to 500% of what it was in 2008 when the opposition captured the state government from BN.

It also alleged the Penang government had sold or traded away at least RM37 billion worth of state land, land rights and assets since 2008.

To this, Lim said while BN had been bad at managing the country's finances, it had been exceptionally good at "corruption and lies".

"If you look at Penang's performance, it has been praised every year in the Auditor-General's (A-G) Report and by Transparency International (Malaysia).

"And while the federal government's accounts have been in deficit every year (since the late 1990s), we recorded surpluses. Their debts keep rising while Penang's has been reducing.

"In the 2015 A-G's Report, it was highlighted that Penang only spent 55% of its allocations but completed 99% of its projects."

As for Penang's land sales, he said they comprised only 3% of the state's total revenue and, hence, would not be a factor in the success or failure of the state.

Lim also said BN had repeatedly attempted to downplay the successes that the opposition led-Penang had achieved but the public only had to refer to the annual A-G's Reports to know the truth.

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