

Dr M: Prove abuse of power in Tajudin-GLCs deal
MalaysiaKini.com
February 23, 2012
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Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) should lodge a complaint on the settlement reached in the court cases between former Malaysia Airlines System chairperson Tajudin Ramli and government-linked corporations (GLCs) if it can prove corruption in the deal.

“Well, if they have evidence that there was a blatant abuse of power, they can make out a case for it...” former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in response to the anti-graft watchdog's position that the deal indicated blatant abuses of power and imprudent management of the country's wealth.

“But I don't know what means they have to lodge their complaints,” Mahathir (right) told reporters today.

Yesterday, TI-M chairperson Paul Low hit out at the lack of public disclosure in Tajudin's out-of-court settlement with Pengurusan Danaharta Bhd (Danaharta) last week.

The settlement marked the end to the six-year dispute over millions of ringgit that Tajudin owed to the national asset management firm.

“In view of the inconsistencies, from the explanations of the personalities involved, a public clarification needs to be done by the government,” said Low.

“As the case involves a public listed company and GLCs, the opaqueness of the settlement will not augur well for Malaysia's standing in the investing community, domestically as well as internationally.

“It shows a lack of consistency and seriousness in tackling corruption (defined as the abuse of entrusted power for person gains) at the higher echelon of the administration,” explained Low (left).

However, Mahathir reasoned that the case was “very sensitive to the government”, with the general election looming.

“Because, it may affect the image of the government and the support for the government in the next election,” he said.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court had on Dec 7, 2009, ordered Tajudin to pay RM589.14 million plus two percent interest a year to Danaharta, which manages the former's unpaid loans, backdated to Jan 1, 2006. The same court had earlier dismissed Tajudin's RM13 billion counter-claim.

However, Tajudin withdrew his lawsuit against Danaharta as well as numerous other litigants, including Telekom Malaysia Bhd, Naluri Corporation, Celcom (M) Bhd, Atlan Holding Bhd and CIMB Group, last week.

Tajudin's settlement resulted from a directive issued by the government in August last year, “advising” all related GLCs, including MAS, to drop their suits against the former.

Write book on MAS saga, Zaid urges Mahathir

Meanwhile, former law minister Zaid Ibrahim in his blog today called on Mahathir to write a book that “reflects the true situation surrounding the MAS saga”.

NONE“Since the settlement was conducted in secret, allow me to guess the terms of the deal: Tajudin was not required to pay a single sen to Danaharta or any of the GLCs; instead, the government will pay Tajudin RM6.5 billion (or half of what he had claimed),” Zaid (left) said.

“Tajudin will then be generous in his contributions to the party coffers for the upcoming general election,” Zaid added.

Mahathir, however, nonchalantly replied: “I’m not in charge of MAS... how can I write a book. I can make some comments, that’s all.”

Earlier on, Tajudin claimed he bought over controlling stakes in MAS for RM1.8 billion on the instructions of Mahathir and former finance minister Daim Zainuddin in 1994. Mahathir, however, denied the allegations.

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