

Najib: George Kent is fit for LRT job
MalaysiaKini.com
Sept 27, 2012

Prime Minister and Finance Minister Najib Abdul Razak has come to the defence of construction company George Kent, which was alleged to have failed competency tests but was still given the Ampang Line LRT extension project.

The premier argued that George Kent's joint venture with Lion Pacific was fit for the RM1.084 billion tender.

In a written reply to a question by Tony Pua (DAP-Petaling Jaya Utara) in Parliament on Tuesday, Najib said George Kent consortium had passed technical evaluation and it also offered the second lowest price among the eight bidders.

"GKLP JV (George Kent-Lion Pacific Joint Venture) is a combination of local companies with financial ability and are listed in Bursa Malaysia.

"The bidder that offered a price lower than GKLP JV was not considered because it did not completely meet the contract criteria," Najib said.

He said the bidding result was accepted by other international bidders and they showed no sign of disgruntlement.

Najib also rebutted the allegation that George Kent has no experience in railway construction because the consortium, comprising various local companies, has expertise in the railway subsystem while the signalling subsystem will be managed by Thales, a technical partner with high credibility.

The tender, he explained, also took into consideration the need to develop local companies and vendors in high technology industries by involving them directly in projects such as the LRT extension.

The prime minister also stressed that the tender process had been open and transparent.

However, the DAP member for Petaling Jaya Utara, Tony Pua, at a press conference in the Parliament lobby today quoted a report from The Edge to rebut Najib's reply.

The report said one of the bidders, Siemens, was not happy with the tender result.

Pua urged the Finance Ministry to explain in greater detail its reasons for giving the contract to the George Kent consortium.

'Failed financial evaluation'

Najib's reply was also contrary to an earlier allegation by PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli that a letter dated Jan 20, 2012, by project owner Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd

(Prasarana) managing director Shahril Mokhtar states clearly that the George Kent consortium had "failed in the financial evaluation".

The letter furnished by Rafizi (left) specifically notes that the George Kent-Lion Pacific joint venture had "failed in the evaluation, be it technical or financial".

"The bid evaluation found that George Kent did not meet the contract requirements... The lie that George Kent passed all evaluations and fulfilled all requirements is an insult to the country's procurement procedures and shows that these procedures do not accord any respect to the bidders," Rafizi said last month.

However George Kent has denied the allegation.

According to Rafizi, the letter from the Prasarana boss to the Finance Ministry also noted that the George Kent consortium had obtained only 8.7 points out of 30 on its financial evaluation.

He said a report by engineering consultant Halcrow, purported copies of which were also given to media, showed that the George Kent consortium scored 38.62 out of 70 on its technical evaluation.

"This places the consortium as the third poorest scorer in terms of technical evaluation. In fact, in its full report, Halcrow stated clearly that the George Kent consortium is incapable of doing the project," Rafizi said.

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