

Obama tells Najib to clamp down on corruption

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US President Barack Obama today confirmed that he told Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to clamp down on corruption.

Obama said he did raise the matter with Najib, just as he advised other leaders here at the Asian Summit from Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, on the importance of transparency, accountability as well as rooting out corruption.

If these things were lacking, development would be impeded, growth stunted, and poverty encouraged, he added.

"I don't comment on investigations happening back in the US, I'm certainly not going to comment on any investigations or legal proceedings that are taking place in a foreign country when I'm a visitor," he said.

Obama was asked what was his message to Najib in relation to the "investment fund scandal", at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

The US president on Friday [pledged to raise](#) the issue of transparency in governance during his scheduled meetings with Najib.

Obama said any country - even if they are resource-poor or landlocked - would improve their positions if they solved the problem of corruption.

"If they don't solve those problems, it doesn't matter how much they are blessed with natural resources, (their) size (or) geography. They are going to fail," he said.

Obama added that he also emphasised the importance of civil society and free press in thriving countries with Najib.

“We don’t expect everyone to follow the same pattern as the US, but I do think there are some basic principles,” he said.

Obama in his three-day official visit here, took the time to [meet civil society](#) groups yesterday.

They were told that while the US recognised the violations of human rights in Malaysia, it must balance the issue with economic ties between the two countries.

Najib, on the other hand, is currently embroiled in the 1MDB scandal and is under probe by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission after RM2.6 billion was found in his bank account.

He said it was a political donation and denied any wrong-doing.

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