

**Nazri: We can't prosecute just to raise CPI rating**  
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The government is powerless in fixing the public perception on the high-profile cases which have supposedly contributed to Malaysia's all-time low Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score, lamented Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Malaysia's rating in Transparency International's (TI) latest CPI, released yesterday, had slightly dipped from 4.5 to 4.4, however the country remained in 56th place.

Although disappointed with the score, Mohd Nazri stated that the government has done its part.

"We have done (everything) humanly possible on our part - by putting up a new Act, we provide good remuneration for the MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) and increased their numbers," said Mohd Nazri.

The minister, in charge of Parliament and law, was referring to TI Malaysia secretary-general Ngooi Chu-Ing's statement that the most glaring aspect in the index was the general perception of a lack of political will to fight corruption.

Ngooi had pointed out that cases such as the staggering cost overruns in the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) and the 'no further action' decision of the Attorney-General (AG) against VK Lingam for allegedly tampering with judicial appointments, and the "continuing and snowballing practice" of awarding mega projects without open tenders.

"I agree with him but (matters like) PKFZ is beyond us now. It's already in the court and I believe this is one of the reasons why the perception is going to be negative towards us and there is nothing we can do.

"Unless of course TI wants us to interfere with the judiciary and direct the judiciary to have a quick hearing and also to decide that those charged be found guilty. I don't think that is what TI wants," he said.

Until and unless the court comes to a conclusion on PKFZ, Mohd Nazri said the perception will remain that the government is not doing much for corruption.

'AG acts independently'

"With regard to the Lingam matter it is again up to the AG, it is beyond the government, because the AG acts independently but of course in my opinion, there is nothing to charge Lingam (with) because there is no proof to show that he had any influence on the appointment of any particular judge," he explained.

"There is no element of a corrupt act because he was not caught with money. So there is no proof. Too bad for Malaysia because in the Lingam case, Lingam is not going to be charged," he concluded.

Nevertheless, Mohd Nazri, who is also the Padang Rengas MP, said that he will push for the cabinet to award contracts via an open tender.

"I will certainly raise this in the meetings of the cabinet that we must implement this open tender as soon as possible and any direct negotiation should be stopped immediately... that we can do," he said.

He, however, reiterated Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's statement that not all projects can be tendered out.

"Of course the prime minister has got his own reasons, probably we want to hasten the project but I think we can overcome this by making it transparent... by making it known to the public what is the real cause, what is the amount of the contract offered to the person and who is awarded the project," he said.

Unlike the previous issues, open tender can be meted out but we can't charge people just to improve our rating, he conceded.

He added that the government is open to ideas from TI, if there other areas of concern that the government needs to look into.

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