

PM denies graft charges an election ploy
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has rubbished claims by Pakatan Rakyat leaders that the recent criminal charges against several high-profile figures are an "election ploy".

"What sandiwara (show)? If someone is prosecuted, it's not a game anymore," he said.

"This has been carefully studied carefully by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption (MACC), which is an independent body... The Attorney-General has also made his decision to (charge), so let the courts decide on the process," Najib added.

Many Pakatan leaders, including PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, have claimed the recent spate of corruption charges, against former Selangor Menteri Besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and former Transport Minister Ling Liong Sik as well, are a "slew of good news" before calling for snap elections.

Speaking at a press conference after an MACC function in Putrajaya in conjunction with international anti-corruption day, Najib said the issue of corruption had long been politicised by the opposition.

"They want to make this issue a political one, and they want to imply that we're not serious, or that we want to cover up, or that we practise selective prosecution, and so on," he said.

He also warned the people not to speculate on the outcomes of the cases.

"We cannot act brashly because there will be even bigger repercussions if we lose in court. Before (the MACC) brings a case to court, it would have made sure that it has a strong case," he said.

'Big or small fish, no one is above the law'

In his speech before witnessing the signing of a pledge to fight corruption by the business community, the premier also warned that no one was above the law when it came to corruption.

"Your position, rank or standing is no guarantee that no action will be taken against you.

"We are all just normal citizens, no one is above the law," he said.

Adding that corruption was like a "cancer" that could turn a rich nation into a failed state, Najib said a corrupt nation had much to lose and a high cost to bear in administration, business and management.

"It (corruption) can destroy society, weaken a country and be the downfall of civilisation if not tackled seriously," he said.

According to Transparency International's latest Corruption Perception Index, Malaysia's score had slipped from 4.5 to 4.4 out of the maximum 10 points this year.

The country ranks at 56th place. Singapore drew with New Zealand and Denmark in top spot among the 178 countries surveyed.

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