

PM: Status irrelevant under law, Khir's prosecution not gimmick
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PUTRAJAYA - The status of a person is irrelevant when it comes to the law and the prosecution of ex-Selangor Menteri Besar Dr Khir Toyo for land fraud is not a gimmick by the Government, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"Everyone is bound by the law and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is free to investigate anyone no matter who they are," he told reporters here Thursday.

PM also denied claims from the opposition that the decision to charge Khir Toyo for corruption was a gimmick by Barisan Nasional (BN) and Umno, to clean up their image, before the general election.

MACC: No 'cover-ups'

Najib stressed that he had never interfered in MACC's work and that the commission was free to investigate anyone.

He said the MACC was a professional body which knew how to carry out its functions and responsibilities.

"The question of 'cover-ups' does not arise because the MACC has to answer to its Operations Evaluation Board if there are complaints of action not taken," he said.

He said there were people who liked to hurl accusations or engage in wild gossip and politicise corruption issues which only further complicated the government's efforts to combat corruption.

"I hope they will not continue with such behavior because what is more constructive is to help the MACC, and not hurl innuendoes and accusations," he said.

To those involved in business, Najib said he hoped they would not hold the view that to succeed like in getting contracts or concessions from the government, they had to engage in corruption.

No sideshow for 'clean' image

The Prime Minister also said BN and Umno had never regarded Khir Toyo's case as a sideshow because the MACC had scrutinized the case before charging the former Selangor Menteri Besar.

"We are not using the prosecution as a gimmick. How is it a sandiwara (sideshow) if he has been charged?" asked the premier.

"This is what happens when a corruption case is turned into a political issue. They (the opposition) want to slam the government by making it look as though we are not serious (in fighting corruption)," he said.

Najib was commenting on a statement by Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim that the decision to charge Khir Toyo was just a sideshow by Umno to portray a clean image before the

general election.

Source: Bernama

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