

Malaysia's Losing Battle Against Corruption

07 December 2011

by Lim Kit Siang

In 2004, former Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced with great fanfare the National Integrity Plan with the five-year target to improve Malaysia's Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) from 37th place in 2003 to at least 30th position in 2008 and the 5.2 CPI score for Malaysia in 2003 to at least 6.5 by 2008.

In 2008, Malaysia deteriorated in both TI ranking and score as compared to 2004, placed in the lowest-ever ranking of No. 47 out of 180 countries with a CPI score of 5.1.

When Najib Razak became Prime Minister in April 2009, he abandoned the National Integrity Plan and announced instead a series of national transformation plans, beginning with the Government Transformation Plan (GTP) with "Fighting Corruption" as one of the six key NKRA's (National Key Result Areas).

The 1Malaysia GTP Roadmap released in January 2010 admitted that the perception of corrupt practices in Malaysia had risen in recent years, estimated that the "significant" cost to the nation of corruption was as much as RM10 billion a year or 1-2% of GDP and announced the target to increase by 2010 "our CPI score from 4.5 to 4.9".

In the event, the anti-corruption NKRA target was another colossal failure as it was completely wide off the mark, as Malaysia's CPI score for three years from 2009 to 2011 was 4.5, 4.4 and 4.3, all three the lowest scores ever registered by Malaysia. There had only been two previous years since 1995 when TI CPI started its annual ranking when Malaysia's score fell below 5, viz 4.8 in 2000 and 4.9 in 2002.

In the first TI CPI in 1995, Malaysia was ranked No. 23 out of 41 countries or the 6th highest-ranked nation in the Asia-Pacific after New Zealand -1, Singapore - 3, Australia - 7, Hong Kong - 17 and Japan - 20, with a CPI score of 5.28.

Seventeen years later, after numerous anti-corruption campaigns, two major anti-corruption legislation, the "elevation" of the former Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) into Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the National Integrity Plan, the 1Malaysia Government Transformation Programme with massive infusion of public funds and increase of staffing, Malaysia has now fallen to the lowest TI CPI ranking in 17 years, viz: No. 60 with the lowest CPI score of 4.3.

Malaysia has also fallen to No. 11 for country placing in the Asia-Pacific. The top TI CPI 2011 Asia-Pacific ranking are:

New Zealand (1) 9.5

Singapore (5) 9.2

Australia (8) 8.8

Hong Kong (12) 8.4

Japan (14) 7.8

Taiwan (32) 6.1

Bhutan (38) 5.7

South Korea (42) 5.4

Brunei (44) 5.2

Macau (46) 5.1

Malaysia (60) 4.3

Even more serious, other countries which had been down on the list of the TI CPI ranking are fast catching up while Malaysia is fast falling down!

China, Thailand, India and Indonesia are such examples in Asia.

China was ranked No. 40 with a CPI score of 2.16 in 1995. In 2011, China is ranked No. 75 with a CPI score of 3.6.

At the annual average rate of China's improvement and Malaysia's regression of their CPI score in the last 17 years, China will not only catch up but will leave Malaysia behind in the TI CPI, both in ranking and in score in a matter of four years – come 2015!

So far, no one in government, whether the Prime Minister Najib Razak, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin or even the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission has shown any concern as based on the TI CPI trend, China will overtake Malaysia as less corrupt country in four years' time by 2015, leaving Malaysia around the 80th ranking with a score below 4.

Other Asian countries like Thailand, Indonesia and India are making major strides in the battle against corruption. Thailand, which was ranked No. 34 with CPI score of 2.79 in 1995 (out of 43 countries) is now ranked No. 80 (out of 183 countries) with an improved score of 3.4. India was ranked No. 35 with CPI score of 2.78 in 1995 is now ranked No. 95 with score of 3.1.

Even Indonesia is making significant strides in the anti-corruption front. Ranked at the very bottom of No. 41 in 1995, with CPI score of 1.94, Indonesia is now ranked No. 100 with a CPI score of 3.0 in 2011.

Malaysia is one of the few exceptions in the TI CPI since 1995 which have been going

backwards while most countries in the world are making progress in the battle against corruption.

This is most deplorable and is one powerful reason why there must be change of federal government in the next general elections, as only a Pakatan Rakyat government in Putrajaya will have the political will to carry out a serious, committed and uncompromising anti-corruption programme to reverse Malaysia's worsening TI CPI ranking and score in the past 17 years under three Prime Ministers.

Copyright © 2011 www.malaysianmirror.com

Source: <http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/6-nation/55839>