

Najib Losing The War Against Corruption
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The CIMB Group chief, Nazir Razak and younger brother to the Prime Minister hit the nail on the head when he told Financial Times that Malaysia must overcome corruption if it is to move up from being a middle-income economy.

In fact, Nazir could be faulted for erring on the side of caution and holding his punches for Malaysia, under Najib Razak's premiership for 39 months, is not only more corrupt than under the two previous Prime Ministers Dr. Mahathir and Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, but is heading towards the dubious honour of being the only Asian-Pacific country to slip in both Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking and score since the introduction of the annual assessment 17 years ago in 1995.

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. (10 stands for "highly clean" and 0 for "highly corrupt")

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 in 2011, 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!

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 41 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 an improved 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 an improved CPI score of 3.0 in 2011.

Is there any other Asia-Pacific country to keep Malaysia company of being hit with a double whammy of a lower TI CPI ranking and score in the past 17 years?

Yes, there is another country – the Philippines whose TI CP ranking was No. 36 with a score of 2.77 in 1997 and both indices fell 17 years later in the 2011 TI CPI being ranked No. 129 with a score of 2.6.

But the Philippines is optimistically looking forward to great improvements in its CPI score if not CPI ranking next year with the catching of several "big fishes" in the anti-corruption campaign of President Aquino, most notably the sacking of Chief Justice Renato Corona by the Philippines Senate impeachment court and the indictment of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, former Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos and Local Water Utilities Chair Prospero Pichay.

If Philippines join the queue of other Asian-Pacific countries with the political will to fight corruption, particularly "big fish" or "grand corruption", with improvement in its TI CPI score, what is Najib doing to ensure that Malaysia is not stuck with the dubious honour of being the only Asia-Pacific country to slip both in TI CPI ranking and score since 1995?

Otherwise, Malaysia will literally be the "sick man" in Asia-Pacific in the war against

corruption– with other countries making progress while Malaysia going backwards in the war against corruption.

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