

## **BN Must Adopt Bold Approaches To Overcome Corruption**

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**By Lim Guan Eng**

BN must adopt a bold innovative approach to overcome corruption and adopt market-oriented reforms based on CIMB Group chief Nazir Razak's proposal to transform Malaysia into a high-income economy.

This follows the startling admission by Nazir in a Financial Times interview that not enough have been done to either overcome corruption and adopt market-oriented reforms that would affect Malaysia's efforts to escape the middle-income trap by 2020.

Nazir had suggested granting an amnesty for those involved in minor corruption, as has been done in Hong Kong; rolling back government in business, both in terms of bureaucracies but also in terms of its direct involvement. Probably Nazir was referring to loss making government-linked corporations or GLCs ranging from MAS to Proton.

Even though some of these ideas may be controversial, a new innovative approach based on competency, accountability and transparency or CAT is crucial. For instance Penang's CAT governance has seen record yearly budget surpluses and a record 95% debt reduction from RM630 million to RM30 million. At the same time, there is clean governance through the implementation of open competitive tenders, full disclosure of government contracts with the private sector, public declaration of assets of State EXCOs including the Chief Minister and the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act guaranteeing the right of information.

The egregious failure of BN to check corruption has even caused Nazir to point out this glaring roadblock to Malaysia's future prosperity. Not only has the BN failed to practice good governance of CAT, BN has been embroiled in less-than-transparent and lavish spending on government procurement projects in areas ranging from agriculture to defence, from the RM250 million National Feedlot Centre that failed to cut the country's beef imports to the multibillion ringgit purchases of submarines and naval patrol boats.

Malaysia's score in Transparency International's corruption perception index has dropped from No. 37 in 2003 to 60 in 2011 out of 183 countries - between Saudi Arabia and Cuba. DAP is willing to consider a bi-partisan approach to assist in the fight against corruption with BN, provided that BN is bold enough to implement open competitive tenders, public declaration of assets by Ministers and enactment of a Freedom of Information Act.

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