

Yes-men' ministers should quit over PKFZ, says PAS
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 — PAS today described as “weak yes-men” the Cabinet ministers who relented to a 2002 decision to buy land for the scandal-hit Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) in a bid to rescue the doomed project.

Its vice president, Datuk Mahfuz Omar, told reporters today that “they should resign from the Cabinet on principle instead of going along with something they did not agree to.”

“Does this practice continue up to now?” the Pokok Sena MP asked.

Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz told the High Court on Monday a majority of ministers initially disagreed with the purchase of land for the project.

“A majority of us did not agree because we did not want to involve the government. We finally agreed, as an attempt to save a failed project,” the then entrepreneur development minister told the court.

The court has also heard that the cost of the project ballooned from RM1.1 billion to RM4.6 billion in 2007 and an audit report has said that it may yet swell to RM12.5 billion.

Mahfuz also said today that Nazri must provide minutes of the Cabinet meeting to show who disagreed as many are still ministers under the Najib administration.

“Then the public can evaluate their integrity,” he said.

Former transport minister Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik is currently on trial for knowingly deceiving the Cabinet into approving the land purchase for the PKFZ, which resulted in wrongful losses for the government.

The prosecution has argued that the additional interest of 7.5 per cent per annum, amounting to some RM720 million, had pushed Port Klang Authority’s (PKA) land purchase from RM1.09 billion to RM1.88 billion for the port project.

The former MCA president also faces two alternative charges of deceiving the Cabinet into believing that the purchase at RM25 psf and the 7.5 per cent interest rate were acknowledged and agreed to by the government’s Valuation and Property Services Department (JPPH) despite knowing that there was no such agreement.

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