

Tee Keat, Hwa Beng say RPK's 'discovery' a carry-over from previous PKA board
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 — Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat and Datuk Lee Hwa Beng, who have recently reignited the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal, denied today any wrongdoing in affirming a price quotation from Kuala Dimensi Sdn Bhd in May 2008.

Raja Petra Kamarudin had alleged on his Malaysia Today website that then transport minister Ong had recommended a price quotation set out by the turnkey developer, which the Port Klang Authority (PKA) would later sue for RM1.6 billion for overcharging and uncompleted work.

But Ong responded in a press statement that the price quotation he signed off on was prepared by Lee's predecessor as PKA chairman, Datuk Chor Chee Heung, who is now housing and local government minister.

"The 'Great Discovery' purportedly exposed by RPK... is no secret at all in the entire episode of the PKFZ probe," he said of the scandal that may cost taxpayers RM12.5 billion, up from an initial RM1.1 billion.

Lee also told The Malaysian Insider that the letter posted by Raja Petra referred to a board decision from February 5, 2008, while he was only appointed to head PKA from March 2008 to March 2011.

"We also didn't have any reports to show any wrongdoing. Only after the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) report did we have reason to refuse to pay," the former Subang Jaya assemblyman said.

Ong also added the decision to approve the quotation "was made on February 5, 2008, before I joined the Cabinet in mid-March 2008."

"I was duty-bound to submit the PKA board's decision and acceptance of the price quotation from KDSB as the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) had yet to be commissioned to conduct the position review of the PKFZ debacle.

"In fact, no contractor should ever be faulted simply due to its price quotation but non-compliance of specifications should," the Pandan MP said.

Maverick blogger Raja Petra had said the duo were "not as innocent as they pretend to be" after recently alleging that their successors were not serious about getting to the bottom of the controversy.

The PKA is suing KDSB RM1.6 billion for uncompleted work in the project that was initially tagged at RM1.1 billion after it was mooted by then transport minister Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik in 1997, but more than quadrupled to RM4.6 billion by 2007.

A position review by top accounting firm PwC revealed in 2009 that the total cost including

interest from debt repayments could reach RM12.5 billion.

Since December 2009, six individuals have been charged in court including ex-MCA president Dr Ling and his successor as transport minister, former MCA deputy chief Tan Sri Chan Kong Choy, who are both accused of lying to the Cabinet.

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