

Najib denies interfering in Ampang LRT deal
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, June 29 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak denied today having a hand in the selection of George Kent for the RM1 billion Ampang Light Rail Transit (LRT) extension project, insisting that the process was “done properly.”

PKR has claimed to possess “solid, documentary proof” that the prime minister intervened in the awarding of the contract, and lodged a police report today over alleged criminal breach of trust and abuse of power.

“Everything is done properly. No such thing, nothing was improper,” the Umno president told reporters after chairing a Barisan Nasional (BN) supreme council meeting.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has started investigations at Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd (SPNB) this afternoon over the award of a RM960 million contract for the project.

PKR had previously questioned a Business Times report that a George Kent Bhd joint-venture could win a RM960 million contract for the Ampang Light Rail Transit (LRT) extension project, saying the consortium was knocked out in the bidding process.

Rafizi had said on June 22 he “can expose that George Kent is not the consortium who was chosen in Prasarana’s open tender process” despite the speculation in the business daily.

The Malaysian Insider reported this morning that the speculated winner of the Ampang LRT system works, the George Kent consortium, was one of three bidders that failed both the technical and commercial evaluation for the RM960 million contract.

Sources told *The Malaysian Insider* that only five of the eight bidders passed the technical and commercial evaluation stage but project owner SPNB finally recommended one of the two South Korean consortiums in the running — PDA Consortium — as the other consortiums were said to not have complied with all conditions.

PKR officials have shown copies of official documents to the press, showing that the Ministry of Finance’s (MoF) Acquisition Committee, which met this January 25, had decided to award the contract to Balfour Bratty Invensys Consortium.

The committee is the highest decision-making body in the MoF and is chaired by Najib himself, who is also finance minister.

The Business Times said Putrajaya was due to announce the winning bidder by the end of June, adding that George Kent was tipped to get the lucrative project. The highest bid received for the project tender, which closed on June 16, was RM1.45 billion.

But PKR’s sheaf of documents showed that the SPNB meeting on December 2, 2011, had recommended PDA Consortium to undertake the project for RM1.12 billion over 44 months. SPNB is a wholly-owned unit of the MoF and the company has budgeted RM1.5 billion for the system works.

SPNB is spending some RM7 billion for the extension of both the Kelana Jaya and Ampang LRT rail networks. The Ampang network will be extended by 17.7km.

Apart from extending the current LRT lines, Putrajaya is also undertaking the multi-billion ringgit My Rapid Transit (MRT) that will snake through the capital city. The country's most expensive infrastructure project is to be ready by June 2017 but there have been delays and reluctance by international companies to bid for the tenders on offer.

The Land Transport Commission (SPAD) has announced that up to RM160 billion could be spent on railway infrastructure projects in the country, making Malaysia a tempting destination for international engineering firms.

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