Follow the money and the truth will be revealed
MalaysiaKini.com
March 14,2012

YOURSAY 'There should be a trail of paper documenting the transactions with Shangri-La Hotel. Just show the hard proof and be done with it.'

Hotel says PM paid for engagement party

your saySwkdayaks: Okay, Shangri-La Hotel said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak paid for the bill, not the Prime Minister's Office. Can the hotel now produce the official receipt issued to Najib for the payment?

Can the hotel produce its statement of account from the bank to show that the cheque for the payment was issued by Najib?

Can the bank also produce a copy of the cheque issued by Najib for the said payment? And can Najib produce his statement of account issued by his bank to show the amount was paid by his cheque from his said account with his bank?

Caripasal: The salary paid to him by the government is the only source of income of our PM. He is not allowed to run any business as a minister, a post that he has held since young. His wife has denied she has any businesses in Malaysia.

How can he afford such an expensive lifestyle, a whopping RM400,000 just for one engagement party? Bearing in mind his wife's luxurious Hermes handbags, we dare the PM to declare his assets.

Gunner: Almost half a million ringgit, can the PM afford to pay the amount? How much is PM's salary per month?

Even his salary is RM50,000 a month, it is very unlikely he can afford to settle the amount. There is a load of questions to be asked.

Malaysiasakit: The event order with an undertaking letter from the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) is sufficient proof that it was intended to be paid for by the government.

If it is a private function, Najib should have engaged a event planner to organise the function under his name and not use the resources of the PMO.

Even if Najib paid for the bill, the whole affair still reeks of abuse of power. Najib must be clear that the PMO is to serve the rakyat and not his private needs.

My professor once told a group of budding public accountants that when serving the interests of the investing public, we need to be upright and more importantly, appear to be upright.

2cts Worth: Why is it such a hassle to produce the cheque for payment as proof? Why has everyone come forward, except the PM himself?

Show the cheque or bank account and be done with it. When one's words carry no weight anymore, a mere denial doesn't convince anyone.

Free & Fair Election: Shangri-La, it's best you do not drag yourself into this mess. While Shangri-La is owned by a Malaysian, it has businesses all over the world. You do not need to depend on businesses in Malaysia alone.

When you step in to make such a bold claim that the payment made by the PM himself, it's best you also produce evidence, like copies of documents produced by PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli with Shangri-La's letterhead.

Maiin2ka: Rafizi is a chartered accountant by profession and I am sure he knows what to ask next from Shangri-La.

The hotel's denial is not conclusive and it should produce a photocopy of the cheque (front and back portion) and official receipt for this payment, and of course, the accounting entries of this particular transaction.

This will complete the audit trail and it would reveal the true nature of payment.

GoneBananas: The engagement dinner cost ‘only' RM409,767... but how much did it cost to fly 260 guests to Kazakhstan for the wedding celebration? Did Najib and Rosmah pay for all the costs too?

If so, isn't it fair to ask; how can a public servant - albeit the highest paid one - afford to spend like an emperor, unless he has siphoned off billions over the years?

Lim Chong Leong: And next question is whether the lobster bisque had real lobster or wagyu beef had real beef or that if they used Kedai 1Malaysia products like oyster sauce without oyster.

The PM is telling us to ‘jimat cermat' (save prudently) but he himself spends lavishly.

Changeagent: Lim Chong Leong, I can assure you Najib's lobster bisque had real lobster, wagyu beef had real beef, and oyster sauce had real oyster because they are definitely not from Kedai 1Malaysia. People like you and I eat Kedai 1Malaysia food at our own expense.

Shangri-La's clarification just doesn't add up. Why would they bill another party unless they have received specific assurances that the payment would be settled by the PMO?

It's not as if anyone can just book an event and then ask them to bill it to the PMO, even if their names are Muhyiddin, Hishammuddin or Mahathir.

The reason being - there is no implicit agreement by the PMO that they would pay for anyone else. However, there was an undertaking that they would pay for Najib, indicating that they had every intention to settle the bill on his behalf.

How else can we explain why the bill wasn't made out to him in his own personal capacity?

HYL: Of course Najib paid, but the real question is, who funded it? In the corporate world, a manager can pay on behalf of the company for food or gifts from his pocket and then later submit his entertainment expense claims to the company for reimbursement.

The PM could do the same, claim it under "entertainment" expenses, which is of course, an entertainment event for the who's who of Malaysia.

Vijay47: Sorry, Shangri-La, but since it involves the prime minister and Najib Razak, I have to split hairs here. If the bill was paid by the prime minister, it would mean it was paid by him in his official capacity.

But if it was paid by the father of the girl getting engaged, it would have been paid by one Najib Razak. So which is which?

Malaysia ABU: How can the payee (Shangri-La Hotel) confirm who actually paid the bill? The auditor-general and PAC should investigate and confirm, not the payer nor the payee, whoever they are.

Joker: A statement made that discloses too little, too late. If I was the hotel operator, I would have jumped in immediately to clear the PM's name when the allegation first surfaced.

Why wait so many days before clearing the name of one of your biggest and most influential customers?

Will the IRB (Inland Revenue Board) now come out with a statement that Najib can afford to pay RM400,000 for a reception party because he has paid lots of taxes in the past?

Or will the daughter come out to clarify that it was actually her husband who gave her the money as part of her dowry and she gave it to Papa Najib to settle the bill?

Quigonbond: There are worse things that this government has done and I have no qualms bashing them, but in this case, just because someone sends a bill to you does not definitely mean you paid for it right?

I can't help notice that perhaps the critique is somewhat off-tangent. If there is to be a criticism, it must be - why is the PMO used to organise the dinner in the first place?

Even if there is no monetary loss as in the use of taxpayers' money, except perhaps the cost of the government officers at PMO organising this instead of doing things that are government related, there is surely an ethical question.

Abasir: The more interesting question that emerges from what appears to be another NFC-like slow-reveal teaser is: why is it so many ordinary folks don't believe the statements from the Prime Minister's Office and Shangri-La?

Is this all the doing of a rabid opposition or is there something more fundamental - like a total distrust of a politician with an infinitely questionable past (a murdered Mongolian, deleted immigration records, late night 'scholarship discussion' with a dropout, Datuk Trio porn tape release, Perkasa, Scorpene commissions, the NFC 'soft' loan, I help you, you help me ...).

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/191981