

PM dismisses 'multi-billionaire' Taib claim

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By Nigel Aw

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has dismissed allegations that Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud had amassed billions of ringgit.

"There are all kinds of allegations, jangan kita layan (let's not entertain it)," he said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

Najib was responding to a question on a report produced by Switzerland-based NGO Bruno Manser Fund (BMF) claiming that the chief minister, who has been in power for 31 years, has emerged as the country's richest man with an estimated wealth of US\$15 billion (RM46 billion).

It also estimated Taib's total family wealth to be at a mind-boggling US\$21 billion (RM64 billion).

The report describes in detail the business activities and personal wealth of 20 members of the Taib family in Malaysia, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Britain, United States and other countries.

On a separate matter, the premier declined to weigh in on the controversy that human rights group Suaram was receiving foreign funding.

"The CCM (Companies Commission Malaysia) is the authority on this matter, let them investigate," he said was his curtly.

'Suaram to be charged'

On Sept 18, Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism Ismail Sabri Yaakob had said CCM was investigating Suaram for "confusing accounts" and expected the NGO to be charged this week.

However, the Attorney-General's Chambers had sent back the investigation papers on the matter to CCM, for being incomplete.

Yesterday, Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia and Umno-linked New Straits Times and Berita Harian highlighted that Suaram and other groups were receiving foreign funding from international organisations.

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein had said that this could pose a threat to national security and the government was monitoring the funds.

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