

PM's aide: Groom's side paid for KLCC bash

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By Anne Muhammad

EXCLUSIVE The social media has been abuzz about how millions were allegedly spent for the lavish wedding of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's daughter, which was held at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC).

The March 28 do was one of five ceremonies to mark the wedding of Nooryana Najwa and her Kazakh husband Daniyar Kessibayev. It was a closed-door event and guests were requested not to snap photographs and post them on the Internet.

Even former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad noted how rumours were circulating that the flower decoration alone cost a whopping RM3 million.

However, Najib's special officer Rizal Mansor clarified that not a single sen of government money was spent for the ornate event and therefore it should not be made an issue.

He told Malaysiakini that the KLCC function was requested by Daniyar's family, and they paid for it.

"They requested the function so that they can celebrate the wedding with their friends here.

"Although it was hosted by the prime minister's family, the request came from the groom's side and the cost was borne by them," he said.

Rizal, who has been with Najib since he became prime minister six years ago, also claimed that the event's wedding planner, a Malaysian, has the skills to turn a moderate event into a glitzy affair.

"Even when someone wears a cheap dress, this person can make it look expensive. There was no wastage at all since most of the items were rented," he said, declining to name the wedding planner.

The special officer also stressed that the wedding planner went out of the way in organising the ceremony because it could help boost the person's business profile.

"You can include it in your portfolio and tell others about it. Even if I pay RM10, you (as a wedding planner) would want to do more so that you can tell others later," he added.

Clearing the air

Rizal (right) also said the media did not mention how local businesses profited from the function - from the wedding planner to flower suppliers.

The special officer said there were two reasons why the wedding ceremony was a closed-door event.

"If it was opened to the public, and the media invited to cover it, then we would be accused of showing off. And second, this was a private and personal event," he added.

Rizal said he decided to explain the issue in order to clear the air.

"I know the real situation. It is not like what people say, so I wanted to give my side of the story because I read all sorts of unfair comments about Najib and his family.

"It is not proper to punish a person without knowing the real truth," he stressed.

Rizal did not reveal how much was spent on the string of wedding events.

Apart from KLCC, ceremonies were also held at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) and Najib's parliament constituency of Pekan. Both were open to public.

There was also a function at Seri Perdana, the prime minister's official residence, for royal guests, whereas the groom hosted a function in Almaty, Kazakhstan.