

Minister: Cabinet in dark over 1MDB-TH deal
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A federal minister today said the cabinet was left in the dark over Lembaga Tabung Haji's controversial purchase of land from debt-ridden 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Wee Ka Siong on his Twitter said he had no knowledge of the deal until it was exposed in the media.

Tabung Haji was embroiled in controversy after it paid RM188.5 million for 1.56 acres of the 70-acre Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) land by 1MDB, which is struggling to repay its whopping RM42 billion debt.

1MDB had purchased the entire 70 acres from the government for a mere RM194.1 million.

This translates to a purchase of RM2,773 per square foot (psf) by TH, while 1MDB bought the land for only RM64 psf from the government.

"Perhaps it is poor timing for Tabung Haji to purchase part of the TRX land or rather, it is wiser for it to consider other investment prospects instead of getting involved in the 1MDB's controversy at this time," Wee tweeted today.

He urged both 1MDB and Tabung Haji's board of directors to answer all questions to give the public peace of mind.

Najib: TH will make millions

The deal, that many see as a bailout of 1MDB by TH, has sparked outrage from even within the ranks of Umno with its leaders now seemingly unwilling to defend Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak anymore.

Najib also heads the Finance Ministry, which owns 1MDB. He is also the chairperson of 1MDB's board of advisers.

Tabung Haji is a fund contributed by largely village folks for their future pilgrimage to Mecca and is considered as a sensitive topic for Malay Muslims, a core support base for Umno.

The fund's chairperson Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim yesterday responded to the outcry Najib as instructed the land to be sold off to give contributors peace of mind, and assured that they will turn in a profit.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today also defended the deal, saying that Tabung Haji will make "millions overnight".

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