

**TI-M: Time Najib finds new finance minister**  
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Transparency International - Malaysia (TI-M) has urged Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to let go of the finance portfolio following the controversial land purchase by Lembaga Tabung Haji from 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

The practice of prime minister also holding the finance portfolio dilutes the principle of check and balance within the cabinet, TI-M said in a statement today.

"By ensuring the finance minister is a different person from the prime minister, the rakyat is to some extent assured that a different pair of eyes and a different, and we hope an independent, mind can properly and objectively weigh the financial decision being made," it said.

It added that not all decisions go to the cabinet for approval and the finance minister has a wide array of powers to decide on his or her own.

"It is just no longer viable from the point of view of integrity, transparency and good governance to put such a portfolio with the prime minister.

"There may have been some administrative efficiency argued in the past for such dual portfolio but this is totally outweighed by the need for the rakyat to see due process being followed and to protect the hard earned tax payers' money," it said.

The finance ministry was first taken up by the prime minister during the tenure of fourth premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad (photo), who took over from his then deputy Anwar Ibrahim during the Asian financial crisis in 1998.

Najib is now Finance Minister II while Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah is Finance Minister II.

**'AG's silence defeaning'**

On Wednesday, a blog leaked documents claiming Tabung Haji purchasing 1MDB's land in a bid to help the cash-strapped 1MDB, which has accumulated a staggering debt of RM42 billion.

This translates to a purchase of RM2,773 per square feet by Tabung Haji, while 1MDB reportedly bought the land for only RM64 per square feet from the government.

It was later confirmed that Tabung Haji had paid RM188.5 million for 1.56 acres of the 70-acre Tun Razak Exchange land owned by 1MDB.

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

Meanwhile, DAP's Puchong MP Gobind Singh Deo urged attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail (photo) to state what has become of investigations into a police report lodged by DAP against 1MDB in March this year.

"It is strange to find the nation's top legal officer absolutely silent in this matter despite the huge sums of money alleged to be involved and the public outcry following thereafter.

"He must state if there is a need to secure if not oversee the movement of funds in 1MDB pending investigations and what has he done to achieve this," he said

Gobind said the attorney-general cannot remain silent while 1MDB continue to make new deals including with Lembaga Tabung Haji recently which has become a subject of public criticism.

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