

Jasa man: PM won't admit mistake if he was a liar

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak would not have amended his answer about 1Malaysia Development Berhad's (1MDB) US\$1.103 billion (RM3.97 billion) in funds if he intended to lie, said Special Affairs Department (Jasa) adviser Tun Faisal Ismail Aziz.

"If the prime minister was lying, it would be impossible that a correction would be made," he said in a blog posting today.

Tun Faisal was responding to former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad's blog posting in which he accused Najib of lying over 1MDB and raised the possibility of a criminal offence.

Mahathir had taken issue with Najib's parliamentary written reply on March 10 where he said the amount had been fully redeemed in the form of cash from the Cayman Islands and is now kept at BSI Bank Limited Singapore.

However, Last Thursday, Najib, who is also finance minister, changed his answer on the matter, stating there is no cash in BSI Singapore, but merely "assets in US dollars".

This became even more baffling when Finance Minister II Husni Hanadzlah (photo) clarified the assets were in fact in the form of "units" but refused to explain what he meant by that.

Mahathir said this has raised serious question on where the money, which was initially invested in a deal with PetroSaudi, had gone to.

Tun Faisal, who is a former Umno Youth exco member, said mistakes can happen such as the Finance Ministry receiving erroneous information.

"It is not easy for the Finance Ministry to check all documents like actual auditors," he said.

He added the exact amount of the money and its whereabouts can be verified by the Public Accounts Committee next month.

Tun Faisal (photo) is the latest Jasa official to come out in defence of Najib who is under siege over the Finance Ministry-owned 1MDB which has amassed a staggering RM42 billion debt.

Last Thursday Special Affairs Department director-general Puad Zarkashi had slammed Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin as "lazy" over dilapidated schools.

This is after a video of Muhyiddin, who is also Education Ministry, was leaked in which it showed Muhyiddin breaking ranks with Najib and demanding that 1MDB's board be sacked.

Muhyiddin had also deviated from Najib's call to give 1MDB more time to sort out its problem, insisting that immediate action, including police investigation, should be initiated.

Puad was a former deputy education minister but could not continue his tenure after being defeated in the parliamentary constituency of Batu Pahat at the last general election.

Jasa is a government department in charge of disseminating information about government programmes but is often seen as an extension of Umno's propaganda unit.

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