

'With VIP jet, why Najib still not in Sabah?'

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With the government's procurement of a controversial new VIP jet, the prime minister could have flown straight back to earthquake hit Ranau in Sabah.

Yet Prime Minister Najib Razak is in Saudi Arabia instead of taking charge of the rescue and relief operations at home, said DAP parliamentarian Lim Kit Siang.

"One question uppermost among Sabahans when I visited the earthquake-hit zones of Ranau and Kinabalu Park yesterday was why Najib, who said only last month that 'I owe Sabah', did not visit Sabah over the Ranau/Kinabalu earthquake disaster before his Saudi Arabia trip on Saturday night.

"With his new personal private jet which cost a bomb to Malaysian taxpayers, Najib should have no problem to visit Ranau and Kinabalu before flying off to Jeddah for his three-day visit to Saudi Arabia," said the veteran leader.

He said Najib should now fly straight from Saudi Arabia to Sabah to live up to his claims of owing the state, where the PM has been drumming up support in face of fierce attacks from his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Umno also often refers to Sabah as its "fixed deposit" to help BN retain its federal power.

Last night Najib blogged that his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin is overseeing operations in Sabah.

The PM's earlier tweet when the disaster struck drew scorn on the social media.

According to Bernama, Najib was launching a Felda D'Saji restaurant branch in Jeddah yesterday, as the desperate search for stranded climbers in Kinabalu continued.

On Friday, the nation woke up to a shocking unprecedented earthquake in the region's tallest mountain, chalking 6.0 on the Richter scale.

The quake has since claimed 18 lives on Mount Kinabalu due to rock slides along the popular tourist hiking trail, with two Singaporean hikers still missing.

'Review poor emergency response'

Lim said Najib's "double absence" from the 1MDB 'Nothing2Hide' forum in Kuala Lumpur on Friday morning and from Sabah over the earthquake disaster were "talking points" of Sabahans when the DAP leader visited the site yesterday.

"In particular, why Najib took some five hours to tweet his concern about the earthquake in

Sabah at about noon when the earthquake struck Ranau and Mount Kinabalu at around 7.15 am on Friday morning!" he quipped.

He said Najib's Facebook postings would do little to soothe Sabahans.

The PM, he said, should instead return immediately and ensure all government machinery is deployed to immediately repair the damage done to infrastructure, schools and amenities.

"Najib should also announce multi-million ringgit allocations to deal with the aftermath of the earthquake, including honouring the 'unsung heroes', the Mount Kinabalu mountain guides who risked their lives to ensure that the injured climbers were brought to safety, especially mountain guide Robert Sapinggi who perished in the earthquake," he said.

He added the PM must form a "high-powered committee" to address the various complaints and criticisms about the earthquake emergency and relief operations.

Lim was referring to an Australian Broadcasting Corporation online news report yesterday in which a climber had called the government's rescue operations a "farce".

Tourist Vee Jin Dumlao was reported commenting the Sabahan trekking guides were "far more helpful than government rescue teams".

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