

Najib's only response on 1MDB scandal: Okay lah

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By Radzi Razak

It was all smiles at the open house of former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today attended by the prime minister and his deputy, despite trying times for the country and Umno.

In fact, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak had only one word to say when reporters swarmed upon him as he left the event, crowding around his car.

They were shouting questions at the PM about his scandal-ridden pet project 1MDB.

"Okay lah," was his only response, before getting in the car and speeding away.

Meanwhile his deputy and predecessor were cordial throughout the event but kept mum when asked on the financial troubles surrounding 1MDB.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin would not comment at all.

Abdullah also did not want to comment on the matter.

"Seronok (I'm excited)," he merely said, when asked how he was feeling today.

"Everything is okay," he quipped when asked to comment about the current issues facing the country, before smiling and walking back to entertain his guests.

The 1MDB scandal has affected Najib's administration as he is also the finance minister and chairman of the debt-ridden company's board of advisers.

'Don't go for overkill'

Separately, the anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International - Malaysia (TI-M) said those implicated in the 1MDB scandal should explain themselves, instead having the government to suspend The Edge Financial Daily and The Edge Weekly, and block access to Sarawak Report.

"Our government must not go for the 'overkill' in suppressing free speech on the pretext of acting against critics. Let's get our facts right before we carry out more irrational measures.

"Let us for a moment step back and ask ourselves why we are in this unwanted predicament today. So many people who are not directly related to 1MDB have been raided, remanded, interrogated and even faced with travel bans.

"If only the few characters that are directly related to 1MDB fulfil their moral and legal

obligations to tell us Malaysians the full story and not bits and pieces which have in some cases been proven incorrect, we could have spent our useful resources to reach the goals of 2020," TI-M president Akhbar Satar (photo) said in a statement today.

Bloomberg reported that the state investment company, which was trumpeted as a cornerstone of Najib's economic policy after he became prime minister in April 2009, is now mired in debts of at least US\$11 billion.

Former premier Mahathir Mohamad, a one-time political mentor who has turned on Najib, accused that "vast amounts of money" have "disappeared" from 1MDB funds.

1MDB has denied the claim and said all of its debts are accounted for.

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