

PM assures grassroots 1MDB debts being slashed

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By Radzi Razak

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has assured Umno grassroots that plans to slash off 1MDB debts are already underway and could be successful within six months.

Answering a query from Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Mohamad Hasan (photo) at the Seremban Umno division annual general meeting (AGM) today, he said the plans have already been put in place after discussions with the Ministry of Finance, which owns 1MDB.

"We have programmes to reduce the debt. I am only asking for six months to make sure it goes underway. It is not like the debt can be reduced overnight but what is important is we have a plan," he told the AGM delegates in Paroi, Negeri Sembilan, today.

He said that the debts could be settled by selling off land assets which belong to 1MDB, such as parcels in Bandar Malaysia and Tun Razak Exchange (TRX).

Najib said that the Emir of Qatar and the Chinese Ambassador had met him and expressed interest in purchasing the said land.

"It means we have assets. It means we have people interested in buying the assets. It means we have a plan to revive 1MDB," he said.

Najib handling of 1MDB and subsequent probe has been criticised for various reasons including not taking the advice to let go of his Finance Minister and 1MDB board of adviser chairperson's post.

Done nothing wrong

However, Najib insisted he has done nothing wrong and that 1MDB will have a better future.

The BN chairman also slammed the critics who had bashed him on the debt-ridden company as though it is the only problem that Malaysia have.

"When (financial) rating agency Fitch came and met me, not only meet but they saw the TRX and visited the 1MDB office, they changed (the ratings) from the negative outlook to stable," he said.

Najib also insisted that the development model for 1MDB does not use people's funding, but private loans and the company would have fared better if the perception to it was not as negative as painted by the opposition.

"If we want to get the value, we should list it in the stock exchange. We wanted to list 1MDB

last year but could not do so as the sentiment (to the company) is not positive. If it is positive, it would have already been listed," he said.

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