

'Save Najib, save Umno or save Malaysia?'

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COMMENT It has been a roller-coaster month which Malaysians had not have the misfortune to experience before.

It began with the explosive Wall Street Journal (WSJ) report alleging that government investigators had discovered US\$700 million (RM2.6 billion) deposited into prime minister Najib Razak's personal bank accounts in AmBank in March 2013 just before the 13th general election.

Najib had not denied this but repeatedly declared he had never taken funds for personal gain.

Then there was a major and ongoing purge and crackdown of key institutions that started with the sacking of the deputy prime minister and the attorney-general.

This was followed by the overawing and intimidation of the cabinet, Parliament, the press and the multi-agency special task force investigating 1MDB comprising Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), Royal Malaysian Police and the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC).

In one month, the country went from the "high" of the prime minister assuring the nation that no stone would be left unturned to get to the bottom not only of the RM42 billion 1MDB scandal but the WSJ report of RM2.6 billion deposited into the prime minister's personal bank accounts, (and Najib was so confident that he publicly declared that all investigations will clear him), to the "low" of the "hunters being hunted".

Also there were allegations that sacked Attorney-General Gani Patail (photo) was in the final stage of drafting corruption charges against Najib himself, and the special task force investigating 1MDB, virtually accused of being involved in an international conspiracy to topple the elected prime minister of Malaysia.

How does one separate fact from fiction, truth from lies?

Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) hit the nail on the head when on Thursday its president Akhbar Satar pronounced the 1MDB probes "dead" - whether the multi-agency special task force, the public accounts committee or even by the auditor-general.

Three arrested

This sombre prediction was driven home by the trio of arrests, namely a MACC deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Sazilee Abdul Khairi who had been handling the 1MDB probe, MACC's former advisory board member Rashpal Singh and the Attorney-General's

Chambers finance and anti-money laundering secretariat member Jessica Gurmeet Kaur.

Where else in the world apart from a failed state in a third-world country do investigators into major corruption scandal commissioned by the prime minister himself, end up being arrested and being accused of trying to topple the elected prime minister by committing the new-fangled offence of “activities detrimental to parliamentary democracy”?

Where else in the world apart from a failed state in a third-world country do the police close its eyes to the existence of a website spinning the theory of an international conspiracy to topple the elected prime minister over the 1MDB scandal, and demanding the most dire actions to be taken against the alleged “conspirators”, even listing the names of 13 such conspirators, two of whom had been nabbed by the police?

The five so-called independent oversight panels of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission had issued a statement warning that there should be no interference or pressure on the MACC or the special task force investigating 1MDB.

This interference and pressure have happened. What heroic action is forthcoming from the five oversight MACC panels to protect the integrity and professionalism of the MACC?

Former prime minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (photo) has urged the newly-appointed cabinet to “act fast” in solving the 1MDB issue as the eyes of the public are on them following the cabinet reshuffle.

The pronouncements of the reshuffled cabinet, in particular the 1MDB “trio” of ministers who are clearly assigned the task to launch an offensive on the 1MDB issue, do not inspire confidence that the reshuffled Najib government would “act fast” to resolve the 1MDB issue, but would only “act fast” to launch a purge and crackdown of 1MDB critics, whether in Umno, Parliament or country.

The dilemma and challenge facing all Malaysians, whether in Umno or outside, is the stark and brutal one: Save Najib, Save Umno or Save Malaysia?

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