

## **RM2.6b donation for PM makes world headlines**

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The RM2.6 billion donation to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has made global headlines.

A quick search on the Internet revealed that besides international media like Time, CNBC, BBC, and Financial Times, local news sites in Japan, Hong Kong, India, and Britain also carried the news.

This includes Britain's The Guardian, India's Hindustan Times, Hong Kong's The Standard and The Japan Times.

As for commentaries, one of the most readable on the matter to emerge thus far was piece by former National Economic Advisory Council member Danny Quah, published in the prestigious magazine, The Diplomat today.

In it, Quah opined Malaysia has gone rogue under the current administration and that the 1MDB scandal has run Malaysia's global esteem in the financial sector to the ground.

1MDB, he said, was starkly different from Khazanah Nasional which he described as one of the world's most respected, successful and scrupulously managed sovereign wealth funds.

"By contrast, 1MDB has seen billions of ringgit of public money moved around the world in suspicious circumstances.

"All of this has dragged down in the world's eyes Malaysia's otherwise globally esteemed financial infrastructure," he said.

Quah, who is currently a professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, also cited a crackdown against the press plus Najib's sweeping changes in the cabinet and Attorney-General's Chambers as examples of how Malaysia had gone rogue.

"One of Britain's greatest friends – a former colony that admired and reflected the grand British ideals of democracy, rule of law, free speech, and egalitarianism – has gone rogue.

### **Co-opted judiciary**

"It does not take authoritarian autocracy to run a country into the ground.

"Regardless of the system of government, it takes only political elites out of touch with their people, a co-opted judiciary, an electoral process that even while open fails to surface progressive leadership and a system that keeps to the law but fails to protect those speaking truth to power.

"Malaysia now has all of these sorry attributes," he said, noting that the country needs a

government that goes back to its roots of serving the people.

Najib is currently engulfed in controversy following reports alleging that state-owned 1MDB, of which he is chairperson, engaged in dubious deals which contributed to its current massive debt of RM42 billion.

Following this, The Wall Street Journal reported that some RM2.6 billion of 1MDB funds had been traced to Najib's personal bank accounts.

The MACC has said the money was not from 1MDB while the prime minister has said that it 'was a donation'.

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