

Utusan's top guns don't buy RM2.6b story?

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Since Sunday, three articles by Umno mouthpiece Utusan Malaysia has dropped hints that the newspaper was not convinced by explanations about Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's receipt of RM2.6 billion in "donations".

Yesterday, the newspaper's senior editor Zaini Hassan wrote that he had been questioned recently by an acquaintance for keeping quiet about "donations and donors".

"His friends who have heard it all, burst out laughing. I replied 'keeping quiet' is better. Sometimes, what's implied in our hearts is better than saying it out loud.

"We all laughed again. But be it a Hari Raya function or a wedding, the gossip and topics are the same," wrote Zaini (photo).

He warned that the opposition is taking advantage of the "ongoing turmoil".

"DAP is clearly strategising quietly. So is PAS and others," he wrote.

This was Zaini's short opinion on the RM2.6 billion controversy and he did not elaborate further.

'Restore Task force's bite'

The day before, another senior editor Zulkiflee Bakar urged Putrajaya to restore the "special task force's bite".

Zulkiflee was referring to the task force initiated by former attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail four years ago, but was disbanded by his successor Mohamed Apandi Ali.

The task force involved multiple government agencies and was tasked with plugging leakages in government sources of revenue.

It later was involved in the probe on 1MDB, the RM2.6 billion "donation", and SRC International Sdn Bhd.

Soon after being appointed attorney-general, Mohamed Apandi (photo) announced that the task force was no longer needed.

Although Putrajaya has closed the chapter on the task force, Zulkiflee said that the task force had shown stellar results and should be given more emphasis.

"The integrity and strict attitudes of the task force made them a nightmare for syndicates. But as they were busy doing their duties, suddenly, they were silenced. There are rumours

that the task force was disbanded because others were jealous.

"But under Mohamed Apandi, it is hoped that he would bring the task force to greater heights. The task force was not meant to make anyone popular or usurp the powers of any other agencies. Instead, the task force makes enforcement work better," wrote Zulkiflee.

BN leaders criticised

But perhaps the most overt criticism of the RM2.6 billion "donation" claim came from Ku Seman Ku Hussain in his article on Sunday.

Ku Seman criticised BN leaders for initially dismissing The Wall Street Journal report on the deposits in Najib's personal account, only to now claim that it was a donation or political funding for Umno.

He said that it has been established that it couldn't have been party funds because party leaders were unaware of it.

"Ordinary people know the difference between (donation and political funding). Political funding ends up in a party account and is subjected to auditing.

"But a donation into a personal account is an individual's right. The public is now urging Umno not to consider individual rights as Umno's rights.

"Thus, Umno needs to stress that the RM2.6 billion was (Najib's) personal matter. Don't say it is the party's right if party leaders themselves are unaware of its existence. Strange, isn't it?" asked Ku Seman.

Ku Seman also wrote of his support for the MACC and urged them to expedite their probe on SRC International.