

PM questions truth of articles in Sarawak Report

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak questioned the veracity of the UK-based Sarawak Report, which has published a series of allegations against 1MDB.

This came just a day after Sarawak Report claimed that US\$650 million of the US\$681 million deposited into Najib's personal bank accounts was transferred back overseas.

However, Najib did not specifically address the latest allegation but focused on the credibility of the whistleblower's past reports about 1MDB.

"Are the emails true or not? Have they been doctored?" Najib asked, during his speech at the launch of the Umno Kepala Batas delegates meeting today.

"We do not know whether the reports are true or not. We should be asking all these questions," he said.)

"Even the (claims of) RM42 billion losses (incurred by 1MDB) - if it were true, How come there were offers of billions of ringgit to buy 1MDB assets?" Najib queried.

Najib told the delegates that the allegations are now being probed by the Parliamentary Accounts Committee.

However, he did not say that the PAC has temporarily ceased its probe on 1MDB as its former chairman Nur Jazlan Mohamad (photo) and several other members like Kepala Batas MP Reezal Merican Naina Merican, have been elevated to cabinet positions.

Najib urged the public not to believe in the social media which he said had changed the legal paradigm that one is innocent until proven guilty.

He said legal requirements in Islam were heavier than in civil law where sufficient evidence is necessary to pronounce someone guilty.

"However, in social media one is already pronounced guilty, the paradigm is upside down, don't believe them as they have no basis," he added.

"But there must be investigation and proof of an offence before we make such conclusions," he stressed.

'Need to correct perceptions'

Najib also said Umno needs to correct perceptions against the party especially in the social media, which is the reason behind the confusion in people's minds.

This is because what is not true becomes the truth in the social media, Najib added.

He said when his predecessor former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (photo) was prime minister from 2003 to 2009, social media was not influential yet.

“But it is my luck, when I became PM, social media became the main news, more so than the print media,” he added.

Najib said the social media spewed lies during the 2013 national polls where there were allegations that BN had brought in 40,000 Bangladeshis as phantom voters.

He added that many believed those lies.

“They never investigated the matter but accepted the lies wholly until people who looked like Bangladeshis were hunted by certain quarters,” he said.

'Debts not fully accounted for'

Debt-laden sovereign fund 1MDB has been criticised by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who alleged that the debts were not fully accounted for.

Financial daily The Edge was suspended for three months for publishing a series of reports on 1MDB, while a warrant of arrest have been issued against Sarawak Report's editor Claire Rewcastle Brown (photo).

Sarawak Report and The Wall Street Journal have published reports on July 3 alleging that RM2.6 billion was deposited in Najib's private bank accounts before the 2013 national polls.

However, Najib did not comment about the latest claims in Sarawak Report that US\$650 million out of the US\$681 million deposited into his personal account, was transferred abroad after the 13th general election.

The money was allegedly transferred back to Tanore Finance Corporation at Falcon Bank in Singapore the same day Najib's Ambank account was closed on Aug 30, 2013.

This is allegedly the same company that had made the initial deposit into Najib's personal accounts, according to Sarawak Report.

Former deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin had also queried what had happened to the balance of the RM2.6 billion 'mystery donation'.