

**More questions on Rosmah's flight to Istanbul on private jet**  
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COMMENT One has the 'akal', the other either lacks it or just took it as a job to be done.

And, without much thinking, of course.

When Rafizi Ramli highlighted the [number of bags](#) that were taken into Airbus ACJ319 which was leased from Air Emirates, I saw something beyond just the number of bags that he was poking fun at.

I could almost read the PKR secretary-general's mind, because he was apparently not focusing on the number of bags; instead, he was talking more about the expenses incurred when a whole entourage of 13 other passengers was travelling with Rosmah Mansor to Istanbul.

Based on Rafizi's calculations, the flight alone would have cost the Malaysian taxpayers a total of RM1.5 million.

What about the hotel where Rosmah was staying with her entourage? How much did it cost in total? Who was footing the bills? Did Rosmah pay for it? Or, did Permata, using donations from the public? Or, did the government of Malaysia pay for the entourage's trip?

What impact did the award make on the country's reputation? How could the money have been better spent, if Rosmah did not use the private jet for her trip to Istanbul to receive the award on behalf of Permata? Could she not have used a commercial flight instead, like most wives of former prime ministers?

### **Time to curb the extravagance**

Rafizi's explosive video clip showing the alleged extravagance of Rosmah on her trip to Istanbul is indeed very timely.

In my opinion, this subject has to be brought up again for public debate, especially at a time when both Kuala Kangsar and Sungai Besar are facing by-elections. It is time for the voters

to send a strong message to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak about the extravagance involving his own family.

Rafizi has also raised the question of a previous flight where Najib took a commercial flight back to Malaysia, but the government jet proceeded on the rest of the journey. Who were on the flight? And was Rosmah's daughter also on the same flight?

Rosmah is not even a government leader, how can she be accorded the same privilege as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong?

At a time when the country is going through a bad patch, Rosmah's aide, Rizal Mansor, in [answering Rafizi](#), simply makes no sense at all.

Najib himself claimed that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has saved the country from going down the path of Greece. In short, Najib was saying that without the GST, the country would have gone bust.

Yet, why is Najib allowing his own family members to spend allegedly at the expense of the country? After all, if he had received RM2.6 billion in 'donations' from some mysterious Saudi donor, he could have easily afforded to pay back the money to the country's coffers like most chief executive officers would do in bad economic times by taking a pay cut.

Malaysians do not need to look beyond the Philippines where former president Ferdinand Marcos and his flamboyant wife, Imelda Marcos, were spending money like there was no tomorrow. This has allegedly led the country to become one of the poorest in the region.

Najib should be glad that we have not become another Philippines, or even near that, but he should not think that the people will always be subdued. At a time when the country is going through a rough economic patch, and its people are now burdened with GST, Najib should take the lead by curbing the expenses incurred by his own wife and family members.

Expensive hairdos should be done away with, and the money used to fund Permata projects which benefit some children. Expensive overseas trips should be cut down.

If the flight and rental of the private jet had cost RM1.5 million to the Malaysian public, Rafizi has indeed been too kind not to include the expenditures incurred by the whole entourage.

Not the number of bags, but if I may put it, the trip itself is a big waste of public funds, especially at a time when the country is going through economic downturn, even being on the verge of becoming another Greece.

### **More questions to be asked**

More questions have to be asked about the flight. Why is Rosmah the only one who has become the attention-grabber?

Why did she receive so much criticism even from former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad over the allegedly huge amount of money spent on her daughter's wedding, even though the family claimed that the money came from the in-laws?

Thanks to Rafizi's highlight, now we are all curious as well what were in the bags that they had to be carried into the plane instead of being checked into the usual luggage compartment. For 20 passengers, the cargo compartment, however small, should be capacious enough to hold everyone's luggage.

We want to know whether the airline has breached the stringent aviation rules? In the name of aviation safety, we are told that even a bottle of water - not to mention cosmetics or lotions - is not permitted on the plane, how could the same aviation rules be bent for the entourage?

Have the contents of the bags been cleared by the customs? Or, is Rosmah travelling as a dignitary exempted from these aviation rules?

The double standard practice of aviation rules have to be revisited, as we do not want another case where a former Selangor menteri besar had hand-carried RM2.3 million in cash to Australia. It does not matter if Rosmah only carries his super platinum card with only US\$100 in her Birkin handbag, but such rules should not be bent for any individuals.

If Bank Negara is serious about money-laundering, it has to put its foot down on the special treatment to Very Important Persons passing through the immigration and custom checkpoints. We want some accountability on the part of our public officials and their spouses.

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