

PM: 1MDB contributed significantly to social welfare programmes

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak pointed out that 1MDB, which has been under the spotlight for the wrong reasons, has made immense contribution to social welfare programmes.

He said 1MDB spent hundreds of millions of ringgit through its charity arm 1MDB Foundation on causes such as flood relief, repairing damaged houses, and assisting fishermen.

1MDB Foundation also sponsored RM10.4 million for 1,100 pilgrims to go to for pilgrimage this year; recipients of which were present with Najib in a Putrajaya mosque today to receive their offer letters.

“1MDB is often being condemned today, but many forget that 1MDB has many social welfare programmes.

“Today’s programme is just one of them,” the prime minister told the would-be pilgrims present.

He added that today’s programme is also backed by a RM8,000 subsidy from Lembaga Tabung Haji per person, which would total RM8.8 million.

Najib, who headed 1MDB’s advisory board until its dissolution, claimed credit for coming up with today’s programme, saying that he sympathised with Muslims who worked hard to earn an honest living but were unable to save much for their pilgrimage costs.

Since its inception in 2011 and its initial batch of 111 pilgrims, he said, 4,611 pilgrims have been sent to Mecca under the programme thus far, with this year’s batch of 1,100 pilgrims being the largest to date.

Najib’s comments today came amid renewed international scrutiny on 1MDB, after the US Department of Justice filed civil forfeiture suits on Wednesday last week seeking, to seize US\$1 billion in assets.

These assets were allegedly purchased with money embezzled from 1MDB and then laundered through the US financial system; although Malaysian attorney-general Mohd Apandi Ali maintains that there is no evidence of misappropriation from 1MDB from any investigation.

Najib said that notwithstanding these developments, the government would continue to strengthen 1MDB's position, so that it could continue with its social welfare programmes.

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