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NEWS

'Is Dr M really interested in 1MDB?'

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Sabah legislative assembly Speaker **Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak** (left) questions why the attacks by **Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad** have continued even after the prime minister has ordered a probe into 1MDB.

IN DOUBT: Sabah speaker says former PM using the issue as an excuse to remove Najib

KUALA LUMPUR

THE criticism levelled against 1Malaysia Development Berhad has never been about seeking transparency over the company's dealings but is a campaign move to remove Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak from office, said Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak.

He believed that had transparency been the goal all along, the attacks by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would have ceased when Najib ordered a

thorough investigation into the investment fund's financial affairs.

Salleh, who is Sabah legislative assembly speaker, said initially, the criticism against 1MDB was allegedly due to a lack of transparency in how the company was managed.

"Is Dr Mahathir really interested in knowing more about 1MDB or is he just using it as an excuse to oust Najib? If he wants to know more about 1MDB, then why does he not want to wait for the investigation report to be released and decide after he sees the report whether all the allegations are true or not?" he said in a blog posting yesterday.

Following widespread allegations over 1MDB, Najib had, on March 4, ordered the Auditor General to conduct an independent audit on the company. This was done despite international auditing firm Deloitte having earlier given 1MDB a clean bill of health.

Najib had also instructed the report to be passed to the Public Accounts Committee, which includes members of the opposition, to ensure full transparency.

Salleh questioned why the attacks by Dr Mahathir continued even after the probe had been ordered.

"When anyone raises the issue about how he managed the country in the 22 years that he was prime minister, Dr Mahathir replies that there is no proof of any wrongdoing and challenges his critics to show proof if there is any.

"But when he criticises Najib, he does not need proof, and suspicion alone is proof enough that there are wrongdoings."

Salleh also took to task Dr Mahathir's allegedly conflicting statements concerning the (1MDB financial) figures.

"First, he says RM42 billion disappeared. Then, the figure is re-

duced and later reduced yet again. And, now, he claims he did not say RM42 billion disappeared into thin air and that 1MDB had borrowed RM42 billion and they must account for what happened to the money."

Salleh said Najib had ordered the investigation to uncover any discrepancy.

"But Dr Mahathir is not interested in the investigation. He has already made up his mind that Najib has to go, never mind what the investigation is going to reveal.

"It is clear that the issue is not about 1MDB any longer. Dr Mahathir just wants Najib to go and the 1MDB issue is being used as the

excuse to oust him.

"Dr Mahathir does not care if 1MDB can account for the money or even if it can show it had made a profit. In fact, Dr Mahathir wants Najib out now before the investigation is concluded in case the investigation proves Dr Mahathir wrong and he can no longer use this issue as an excuse to demand Najib's resignation.

"Is Dr Mahathir really concerned about 1MDB or is he more concerned about replacing Najib with a new prime minister, who is prepared to kowtow to whatever he wants? Maybe Dr Mahathir would like Najib to call off the investigation since he is not interested to see the report."