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KUALA LUMPUR: It would be pointless for the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to answer critics of the controversial strategic development company Malaysia Development Bhd (IMDB).

Sabah Umno deputy chief Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak in his post yesterday said this was because IMDB's critics refused to hear out or accept any explanation given.

"Is there any point in the prime minister doing what everyone is asking him to do — that is to explain what is happening in IMDB? Even when he does, the critics are still going to reject the explanation."

He said a case in point was the criticism against Najib that Malaysians were not given details about IMDB's exposure of RM42 billion.

"Some even do not understand the difference between exposure and loss, and think that RM42 billion was what IMDB lost. As (former prime minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said, whether money had been lost or not was not the issue because during his time, money had also been lost.

"In fact, during Dr Mahathir's time, the government lost more than RM42 billion. The Forex losses alone came to RM58 billion at today's value and add that to the RM20 billion MAS (Malaysia Airlines) disaster, that comes to RM78 billion," he said.

The international media, he said,

had been giving wide coverage on the Malaysian Airline System Berhad (rebranded as Malaysia Airlines Berhad), which was described by chief executive officer Christoph Mueller as technically bankrupt and would lay off some 20,000 staff.

He said attempts to answer any queries on the government investment arm were met with rejections.

"Take the investment from Abu Dhabi as an example. Everyone in the industry knows that IMDB chief Arul Kanda Kandasamy has good links with Abu Dhabi.

"So, this means that it is not a problem for him to attract investments from there.

"Then, when it was explained that billions of investments from Abu Dhabi was coming in with a first payment of US\$1 billion (RM3.7 billion) and that it was not a loan, Tony Pua from DAP asked what it was, if it wasn't a loan," Salleh said.

The Petaling Jaya Utara member of parliament, who is also a member of Public Accounts Committee, had been vocal about the financial status of IMDB.