

MAS bailout: Kit Siang wants Najib to tell the truth
The Malaysian Insider
February 25 , 2012
By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 25 — Lim Kit Siang today demanded Datuk Seri Najib Razak validate accusations against Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad over Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli's MAS (Malaysia Airlines) purchase in 1994, or charge the latter with perjury.

The Ipoh Timor MP said as prime minister, Najib would know the truth behind the purchase and the government's subsequent bailout of the flag carrier to save it from massive financial losses in 2001.

"Malaysians want him (Najib) to tell the country the truth, whether it is Mahathir or Tajudin who is lying and whether criminal action would be instituted against Tajudin if he had committed perjury in his affidavits," Lim (picture) said in a statement.

Tajudin was recently freed from a RM580 million debt resulting from the loan he had taken to purchase MAS in 1994, after agreeing to an out-of-court settlement initiated by the Najib administration.

But in his court affidavits earlier, the former MAS chairman had claimed it was former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir who made him purchase the controlling stake in MAS at the time.

According to Tajudin, this was to help bail out Bank Negara after the central bank suffered massive foreign exchange losses due partly to speculation in foreign currency markets.

Describing this as "national service", Tajudin had also claimed the purchase had come with an "overriding agreement" to indemnify him against any losses suffered.

But Dr Mahathir denied the accusation in his autobiography published last March that he had forced Tajudin to purchase MAS in 1994 for RM1.8 billion, claiming instead that the latter was "elated" over his purchase.

Lim, however, asserted today that Tajudin's claims were more credible than Dr Mahathir's as the ex-MAS chairman would have known he would be liable to perjury charges if he had lied in his affidavit.

The DAP adviser said that Tajudin would have been "out of his mind" to buy MAS shares at RM8 at the time when they were merely trading at RM3.50.

Tajudin, added Lim, would have likely only done so if he were protected by the "overriding agreement", as he had claimed.

"The overriding claim appears credible because the government did subsequently buy back from him (Tajudin) (MAS shares) at twice the market price, which the government was not otherwise obliged to do so," Lim said.

As such, the DAP leader demanded a "frank and honest" answer from Najib as to whether Tajudin's RM589 million debt bailout meant that Malaysians are still paying for the RM100

billion financial scandals allegedly incurred by Dr Mahathir during his 22-year tenure as prime minister.

“More and more Malaysians are asking this question as there is total lack of transparency, accounting, explanation or details for the RM580 million out-of-court settlement with government-linked corporations, raising the question whether the Barisan Nasional government has achieved another entry in the Guinness Book of Records in being the first government in the world to surrender a court judgment for RM580 million,” said Lim.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/mas-bailout-kit-siang-wants-najib-to-tell-the-truth/>