

Malaysia can go bankrupt if Dr M's warnings on 1MDB ignored, says Mat Taib

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By Md Izwan and Hasbullah Awang Chik

Malaysia could go bankrupt if Umno continues to ignore Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's warnings on the debt-laden 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), said former Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib.

Muhammad said this was possible if Umno continued to support Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's leadership, which he said was fraught with greed and weaknesses.

"If Umno members continue to throw their support behind a leader who has lost his capabilities and is extraordinarily greedy, at this rate the country could become bankrupt," Muhammad, who is popularly known as Mat Taib, told The Malaysian Insider.

The former Selangor menteri besar had attended Dr Mahathir's meet-the-people session over the weekend, which saw the former prime minister reiterating his criticisms against Najib.

Muhammad, who is now a PAS member, said Dr Mahathir's criticisms stemmed from concern and disappointment that the prime minister was leading the country into ruin.

"We don't know what Dr Mahathir is thinking, but he is very disappointed when there is a leader who can be considered as ruining the country," said Muhammad when asked about Dr Mahathir's critical stance against Najib as of late.

Muhammad said the continued attacks, as well as Dr Mahathir's upcoming roadshow, would add pressure to Najib's administration, especially as the prime minister has failed to respond to the issues raised by his senior.

"I can see that Dr Mahathir is very focused and he is now giving further explanations, through question-and-answer sessions, on the matters he has previously brought up, especially 1MDB.

"I definitely think it is adding pressure because so far, no satisfactory answer has been given, despite Dr Mahathir's relentless questions on the disappearance of such a large sum of money. It is a major issue which could have negative implications on the country, so of course, we, the people, want to know what happened and where the money went."

Muhammad also urged for a forensic audit to be carried out on 1MDB, which is wholly owned by the Finance Ministry.

"I don't think only an audit should be carried out, but a forensic audit as well, to examine the purchases. Some purchases are said to be too expensive or too cheap, why is it this way? The IPP (independent power producers) are all expensive, according to Dr Mahathir.

"There was land that was purchased cheaply, like in Sungai Besi, and that is a loss for Malaysians because the land belongs to the public," Muhammad added.

On the presence of many Umno veterans at the recent forum with Dr Mahathir, Muhammad said many wished to hear for themselves what the country's longest-serving prime minister had to say.

"They want to hear it directly from Dr Mahathir, after he has been speaking out for weeks and months, and now he has explained himself."

On Saturday, Dr Mahathir told the forum at a club in Kuala Lumpur that he would not forgive Najib for the RM42 billion that 1MDB has incurred as debts.

Dr Mahathir had also raised concerns over 1MDB's business deals, including the state investment arm's purchase of several power assets and government-owned land.

He also reiterated his call for Najib to resign and make way for a new prime minister.

The former premier had also attacked the "lavish lifestyle" of Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

Najib took part in an interview on TV3 earlier this month to address some of the issues raised by Dr Mahathir, but the former prime minister said Najib had still left a lot unanswered and continued to speak out against him. – April 27, 2015.

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