

Najib promises to solve 1MDB saga by year's end

The Malaysian Insider

Jun 14, 2015

By Ram Anand

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today promised Umno leaders and pro-establishment non-governmental groups that he would solve controversies surrounding 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) in two months, at the earliest.

Najib said so during a closed door session with Umno division information chiefs and NGOs at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) today, according to one of the attendees.

Hasan Hamzah, who is de-facto leader of the group Gabungan Bertindak Perpaduan Melayu, said Najib had made this pledge and given a timeframe of between two to six months.

"Earliest is two months, but at any rate, he said he will solve it by the end of the year," Hasan said when met at PWTC, which houses the Umno party headquarters.

Other Umno leaders, however, remained coy about the details of the closed door briefing which began earlier this afternoon.

The briefing today was held for Najib, who is also Umno president, to address party grassroots leaders on the recently-tabled 11th Malaysia Plan, the goods and services tax (GST) and other current issues.

Najib is hard-pressed, too, to explain allegations concerning 1MDB, which is his brainchild and which sits on a RM42 billion debt incurred in six years of operations.

Hasan said that since 1MDB is a business entity, solving it won't be done in a short time.

"A lot of the allegations against 1MDB are just from the opposition. The PM admitted there are problems, but this is a business entity, it has enough assets," he said.

"But it cannot be done immediately. So that is what the PM is asking for – time. If we give him enough time, he would be able to solve all the problems," he added.

Hasan also urged Najib to meet former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as soon as possible to explain the same to the latter.

"It's all about a clash of personalities, Tun had his way of administrating, now Najib has his own style," he said.

Hasan said that Najib, without specifically referring to Dr Mahathir, had said that since Umno supports him, he would stay in the job and solve the problems.

"He said he cannot bow down to an individual's pressure, whoever that may be," he said.

"The PM is just disappointed. He feels we shouldn't be fighting for an issue that is not big," he added.

Dr Mahathir had repeatedly called for Najib's resignation.

Hasan said that representatives from 1MDB and the Ministry of Finance were also in attendance during the briefing.

Meanwhile, Umno Youth information committee member Rozaidi Jamil said that if Najib had explained such details earlier, many of the controversies surrounding 1MDB would not have taken place.

"What was explained was very clear. If this was explained before this, we would understand. Why wasn't it answered before?" Rozaidi said.

He also said that if Dr Mahathir had been in attendance today, even he would be supportive of Najib. – June 14, 2015.

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