

## **Ahmad Maslan defends Najib, says PM not stupid to take government money**

**The Malaysian Insider**

**July 10, 2015**

**By Ista Kyra**

Datuk Ahmad Maslan has defended Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, saying the prime minister is not that stupid to take government money following The Wall Street Journal's (WSJ) report that US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) was transferred into his personal bank accounts.

The deputy finance minister also said Najib was not such a person to take government money and Malaysians should not trust the global business newspaper.

"What kind of stupid prime minister would take RM2.46 billion in funds from a government agency into his personal account?"

"This is an improbability (kemusaliran) of the greatest kind. If it is true, it is a stupidity (kebebalan yang terlau amat sangat) of the greatest kind," he said.

"The prime minister has told us that the information is 100% not true. Don't worry, he is not that kind of person. We should not be like WSJ to believe in such weird news," Ahmad said in his speech at the closing ceremony for the Customs Department's nationwide goods and service tax (GST) engagement programme in Ipoh this morning.

The Umno information chief said in the past week, he had been busy visiting several Umno divisions in Kuala Kedah, Sungai Petani, Bayan Baru, Batu Kawan, Kuching and Shah Alam to explain about 1MDB, GST and WSJ report in closed-door meetings.

Ahmad said he did not think anyone would be so stupid to keep such a large amount of public funds in their personal account.

He added that he had made a phone call to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) president and group executive director Arul Kanda Kandasamy yesterday, after reading reports of the Finance Ministry's wholly-owned investment vehicle office being raided by police and officers from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Agency (MACC).

He said he had asked Arul if any misappropriation had been carried out by 1MDB and if a single sen from 1MDB had entered the prime minister's account, both of which Arul denied.

"Sometimes, many things are just perceptions. 1MDB is actually a good firm that wants to develop the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) in Kuala Lumpur into a great financial centre," said Ahmad.

Last week, WSJ reported that US\$681 million (RM2.6 billion) originating from Tanore Finance, a company in the British Virgin Islands, was deposited into Najib's accounts in two transactions on March 21 and 25 in 2013, ahead of the general election in May that year.

The business daily also uploaded documents used in its report which showed instructions for telegraphic transfers and charts showing the money trail.

A special government task force probing the allegations confirmed that Najib had accounts at AmBank, but the two accounts had been closed before the WSJ broke the story. – July 10, 2015.

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