

Singapore launches money-laundering probe into 1MDB bank accounts, says BT
The Malaysian Insider
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Singapore police have started investigations into money laundering on two bank accounts linked to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) in the island republic, The Business Times (BT) reports today.

The Singapore business daily said two accounts were frozen on July 15, just a week after Singapore's central bank said it was in contact with financial institutions in relation to Malaysia's probe into allegations billions of ringgit from 1MDB-linked firms had been transferred into the prime minister's personal accounts.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) said on July 8, it would assist Malaysia and share information where it was legally able to.

BT said today the investigation into possible money laundering offences came under the corruption act and penal code "to prohibit any dealings in respect of money in two bank accounts that are relevant to the investigation".

On July 2, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported that investigators looking into debt-laden state-owned fund 1MDB had traced nearly US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) which came through a private bank account in Singapore into accounts in Malaysia they believed belonged to the prime minister.

On July 9, a task force investigating the allegations raised in the WSJ said two bank accounts belonging to Najib in AmBank had been closed before the expose was published.

The 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 May general election.

One of the accounts had been closed on August 30, 2013.

Another sum of US\$11.1 million originating from Finance Ministry-owned SRC International Sdn Bhd was moved in two tranches between December 2014 and February this year.

The second account was closed on March 9 this year. Six accounts were frozen in relation to the investigation.

Three of the frozen accounts belonged to Najib, another to SRC International and one to Ihsan Perdana, a local company that was part of the RM42 million money flow.

Reporting on news of the freeze, the WSJ said the ones that had been frozen were different from the accounts it had reported on.

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

Najib denied taking money for personal gain, but has not commented directly on the fund transfers to his accounts. Bank Negara and AmBank have also not responded to the allegations.

1MDB, whose advisory board is chaired by Najib, is facing criticism over its debts of nearly RM42 billion and alleged financial mismanagement.

Earlier this year, MAS said it was in touch with Malaysian regulators after Putrajaya said 1MDB had redeemed US\$1.1 billion from the Cayman Islands and parked it in the Singapore unit of Swiss private bank BSI. – July 22, 2015.

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