

If I wanted to steal money, I wouldn't put it in Malaysia, says Najib
The Malaysian Insider
July 5, 2015
By Anisah Shukry

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today rubbished claims he had stolen 1Malaysia Development Bhd's (1MDB) funds, saying that if he wanted to do so, he would not have placed the money in a bank account in Malaysia.

He said he was merely a victim of certain quarters who were trying to twist public perception so that the opposition would gain more votes in the general election.

"In the past one or two days, they have come up with all sorts of stories. I have become a victim of their relentless attacks lately, that I supposedly stole a huge amount of money and placed it into my personal accounts.

"I am thankful, there are some who say they don't believe the news, including Datuk Haron Din on his Twitter. He said it didn't make sense for me to do something like that.

"If I wanted to steal, surely I wouldn't steal the money and bring it into an account in Malaysia. That is, if I wanted to be a robber (penyamun). But of course, as a prime minister, I won't betray Malaysians and what belongs to Malaysians," he said in his speech at the Bandar Rinching Mosque in Semenyih.

On Thursday, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) alleged that up to US\$700 million (RM2.6 billion) was transferred to Najib's personal bank accounts with AmBank in 2013, just before the 13th general elections.

But Najib on Friday stated he had never taken any funds from 1MDB for personal gain and pinned the blame for the latest report on former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has in recent months called for Najib's resignation.

However, opposition politicians have taken Najib to task over his "ambiguous denial", while WSJ is standing by its story, saying its report was based on solid documentation proof.

Meanwhile, the prime minister said today his critics used social media to play up false issues, and pointed to the storm over 1MDB's debts as an example.

He said Fitch Ratings had said 1MDB did not pose a systemic risk to the country, and that the agency was confident with the state investment arm's rationalisation plan.

"So when there are quarters that play this up, it's all just perception. In this era, with social media, their purpose is not to find truth, but to carry the latest news, regardless whether it is accurate, false, or semi-false.

"Their goal is not to expose the truth, but to change the people's perception.

Perception towards the government, and perception towards the leaders," said Najib.

He said that under Barisan Nasional's rule, the country became renowned for practicing moderate, progressive Islam, and that "even non Muslims are respected and given a good place in our country"

"So we must defend the Umno and BN leadership because we know the opposition is weak, even though they are still together. With their conflicting ideologies, they cannot bring stability to Malaysia.

"Ruling at the state level is a different matter, but, nationally, we need a federal government that is strong, stable and can take us into the future," said Najib.

A multi-agency task force has been set up to investigate WSJ.

Najib's own Cabinet ministers, including Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, have urged the PM to take legal action against WSJ if the report is untrue.

Najib, who is also finance minister, is chairman of 1MDB's advisory board. – July 5, 2015.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/if-i-wanted-to-steal-money-i-wouldnt-put-it-in-malaysia-says-najib>