

No need for Najib to go on leave, he did not commit any offence, says Nazri Aziz
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By V. Vasudevan

There is no need for Datuk Seri Najib Razak to go on leave pending investigation into the alleged fund transfers from 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) to his personal accounts as it has not been proven if the prime minister had committed any wrong, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said today.

The tourism and culture minister also said the opposition's fears that the investigations would be compromised if Najib was still in power, were unfounded.

"Why should he go on leave? He did not commit any offence. You only go on leave if you have been charged.

"If this is the case, any time there is an allegation, every leader will have to go on leave," Nazri told The Malaysian Insider.

However, Nazri said if Najib was charged with any wrongdoing, then he would have little choice but to take leave.

"But mere allegations should not be reason enough to go on leave," he said, adding that he did not think the prime minister would interfere in the investigations either.

"Why should he interfere? He is also interested in resolving the issue. Anyway, he is too busy running the country."

Earlier today PKR had suggested that any investigation into the alleged fund transfers would be a "waste of time" if Najib does not, at least temporarily, step aside as prime minister during the course of investigation.

Its vice-president Chua Tian Chang said if Najib continued being in his position, the public would find it difficult to believe that the investigations were done without fear or favour.

Attorney-General (A-G) Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail yesterday confirmed to having seen the alleged documents regarding the fund transfers and said a special task force was set up comprising the police, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and Bank Negara Malaysia to investigate the matter.

The task force had raided SRC International Sdn Bhd, Gandingan Mentari Sdn Bhd and Ihsan Perdana Sdn Bhd offices on Friday to obtain more documents.

"We all understand the immense power vested in the PM. It will be a waste of time if the A-G or any task force continues to investigate 1MDB under the stewardship of

Najib," Chua said in a statement today.

"If the PM has nothing to hide, he should be brave enough to at least temporarily step aside to allow an independent inquiry."

Former Malacca chief minister Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik took to his Facebook account yesterday and also suggested that Najib step down temporarily.

"Maybe when the investigation is under way, Najib should let go of his position as prime minister for the time being, until he is cleared," Rahim said, adding the prime minister's accounts should also be investigated, if Bank Negara and AmBank confirmed their existence.

Nazri, meanwhile, also felt that Najib should not take any legal action against the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) which came out with the exposé on Friday.

"No necessity for the prime minister to take action. If he takes action he must sue all those papers which have written this false allegation. Not just WSJ.

"He has to sue everybody. He will be accused of being selective if he just sued WSJ."

On Friday, the business daily said investigations into the debt-ridden 1MDB had allegedly uncovered billions of ringgit pumped into Najib's personal accounts at the AmPrivate Bank in Kuala Lumpur.

In their reports, both WSJ and whistleblower site Sarawak Report had quoted from documents from the 1MDB probe by the Malaysian government, with Sarawak Report claiming that the A-G was also aware of the information.

The documents allegedly showed US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) was moved among government agencies, banks and entities linked to 1MDB, which finally ended in the prime minister's personal accounts, in five separate deposits.

WSJ said that the largest transactions were deposits of US\$620 million and another one for US\$61 million between March 2013 and February this year. The first transaction was done two months before the 13th general election.

Sarawak Report said RM42 million had gone into Najib's accounts from SRC International Sdn Bhd, the Finance Ministry-owned company that had taken a RM4 billion loan from the Retirement Fund Incorporated.

The latest transaction, the reports said, was in February this year. The documents show that SRC International had transferred RM10 million into an account under the name of "Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Hj Abd Razak".

Najib previously had blamed the WSJ report on former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, describing this a "political sabotage".

In a post in his Facebook page on Friday, Najib had said these attacks began when he refused to implement Dr Mahathir's personal demands, adding that the former prime minister then "created a crisis" by recklessly claiming that RM42 billion was missing from 1MDB.

This is the first time Najib has been directly linked with 1MDB's woes, as the company sits on a RM42 billion debt. He is also chairman of its advisory board. – July 5, 2015.

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