

Najib must answer WSJ's allegations on fund transfers, says Muhyiddin

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The Wall Street Journal's (WSJ) accusation that billions of ringgit was transferred from state-owned funds into the personal accounts of Datuk Seri Najib Razak is a serious matter that needs explaining, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

Breaking his silence on the WSJ expose, the Umno deputy president admitted that the issue had raised many questions that remained unanswered.

Muhyiddin said the issue had caused some worry as it does not involve a small amount but millions of (US) dollars.

"When the news first came out, I texted the prime minister, saying: 'Sir, this was something serious that you have to deny'. He replied, saying thanks and told me he had already done so.

"Although there was a denial, it was from the Prime Minister's Department. I told him again that he had to be the one to do it as the allegation was made against him and then only there was denial," he said when officiating the Cheras Umno division meeting in Kuala Lumpur tonight.

Earlier this month, WSJ and whistleblower website Sarawak Report made the revelation that up to US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) was allegedly transferred from state-owned funds to two bank accounts under Najib's name with AmBank in early 2013.

The prime minister, however, has denied ever taking any funds from 1MDB for "personal gain" but has not commented directly on the fund transfers. His accounts that allegedly received the funds have since been closed.

He has also blamed former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, whom he accused of working with foreign agents against his administration.

Dr Mahathir, who had supported Najib to take over from Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as prime minister in 2009, has in the past six months openly called for his resignation over his handling of the debt-ridden 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

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

He has long been criticised over the fund's RM42 billion debts and opaque dealings, but latest allegations have hit a personal spot as money was alleged to have been transferred to his personal bank accounts in 2013, ahead of the 13th general election in May that year.

Following this, a special task force was formed to investigate 1MDB as well as WSJ's claims that billions of ringgit were transferred from other companies linked to the fund to Najib's personal accounts.

The task force includes Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar, Bank Negara Malaysia governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission chief commissioner Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed.

Muhyiddin said he had raised the 1MDB issue at the Supreme Council meeting and also the weekly Cabinet meetings.

"I have a responsibility as deputy prime minister. I have at the Cabinet meetings every week stressed there must be a solution to this problem.

"If this is not settled it will be a burden. If there is no 1MDB there would be no problem" he said.

Muhyiddin said he had been criticised by the public for being silent on the 1MDB issue but added it was not an easy matter to explain

He said that is why he was supportive of the special task force set up to investigate the 1MDB and felt it should be allowed to carry out its duties without any interference from anyone.

Muhyiddin said he did not object if the Auditor-General's interim report on 1MDB was made public.

"I don't have any objection to this. If the report is made public no one will ask if the international news agencies were distorting the 1MDB reports," he added. – July 26, 2015

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