

Ringgit will recover if Najib steps down, Dr Mahathir says again
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By Eileen Ng

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reiterated that the free fall of the ringgit will be resolved if Datuk Seri Najib Razak steps down as prime minister.

The former prime minister said he agreed with Bank Negara governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz, who said the ringgit, Asia's worst performing currency of the year so far, was expected to recover once issues surrounding troubled state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) were resolved.

"The damage has been done. It is going to be more damaging in the future unless you get rid of this man.

"If Najib is not the prime minister, I believe the ringgit will improve in a short time.

"To solve the ringgit woes, Najib has to step down," he said during a question and answer session at a high tea organised by Pusat Bandar Taman Cempaka Umno branch.

Besides 1MDB, Zeti had also cited other factors which could prompt a recovery in the ringgit, including an eventual decision by the US Federal Reserve to raise interest rates, a recovery in global commodity and energy prices and improvements in China's economy.

1MDB has been the subject of multiple investigations amid allegations of financial mismanagement and graft.

Najib, who also chairs the 1MDB advisory board, has resisted calls for him to step down but controversies continue to swirl. 1MDB is seeking to reduce its US\$11 billion (RM44 billion) debt by selling power and property assets.

Despite Putrajaya's assurances that the country's fundamentals are strong, worries persist over the economy as the ringgit has plunged beyond RM4 against the US dollar while foreign exchange reserves slipped below US\$100 billion last month for the first time since 2010.

Najib is facing intense scrutiny over the RM2.6 billion "donation" from an unknown Middle Eastern donor into his personal accounts while at the same time, his brainchild, 1MDB is facing multiple probes of its alleged financial irregularities.

Najib had in August announced a new committee to ensure Malaysia's economic growth in the face of what he described as "uncertain and challenging times". – October 3, 2015.

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