

**Malaysia's rep sinking along with Najib's RM2.6 billion scandal, says Aussie daily
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Malaysia's reputation is sinking along with the brewing financial scandal surrounding state investor 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and the recent decision to clear the prime minister of any wrongdoing in accepting RM2.6 billion from the Saudis, the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) says today.

In a stinging commentary, the Australian daily zeroed in on Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali's decision not to charge Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who chairs the 1MDB advisory board, of any criminal wrongdoing over the US\$681 million deposited into his bank accounts in early 2013.

"Attorney-general Mohamed Apandi Ali issued a 'move along, nothing to see' order to anyone worried about the donation of such a princely sum to a sitting prime minister's personal bank account in a country claiming to be a representative democracy," the editorial said.

The report noted that Apandi, in clearing Najib, said the prime minister had no knowledge of a further A\$10 million transferred into his account from SRC International Sdn Bhd, a Finance Ministry company.

"SRC's role is politically explosive because it received a \$US930 million loan, approved by Mr Najib's cabinet, from the government fund that manages the retirement savings of Malaysia's public servants.

"The attorney-general said Mr Najib had believed the AUD\$10 million, too, had come from the Saudis."

It also noted that Apandi was appointed last year after his predecessor, Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail, was abruptly removed "in a flurry of sackings and transfers of people" who had either been critical of the prime minister or were involved in investigations into 1MDB.

It also said that in October last year, Apandi refused to bring on criminal charges against the state fund as recommended by Bank Negara Malaysia.

The editorial said up until now, Najib has survived large street protests and a campaign to unseat him by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"How much longer can Malaysia be regarded as a modern, moderate nation in charge of its destiny?

"Its strategic importance as a moderate Muslim nation region in a time of terror has so far spared it much international condemnation, but its reputation is sinking. It needs to step back from the brink." – February 1, 2016.

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