

1. No land deal with 1MDB, says Tabung Haji

KUALA LUMPUR: Tabung Haji has denied allegations that pilgrimage fund board had acquire plots of land owned by 1Malaysia Development Berhad at exorbitant prices.

Its chairman Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim said the claim is untrue, and that Tabung Haji will issue an official statement on the matter soon.

"Wrong. Tabung Haji will release a statement as soon as possible," Abdul Azeez said in response posed to him on Twitter Wednesday night.

The claim first emerged when a blog called 'The Benchmark' published a set of documents on Tuesday, purportedly detailing the proposed purchase of two plots of land at the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) -- one for RM194 million at RM2,6860 per sq ft, and the other for RM578 million at RM3,900 per sq ft.

Claiming it had received the supposed documents from "little birds" in Tabung Haji, the blog claimed the deal had received the government's approval in less than two weeks.

Calling it a "fast-track" deal, the blog claimed the money had been paid to 1MDB in full.

The blog also claimed that 1MDB had acquired large tracts of TRX land in Jalan Tun Razak at a cheap rate of RM60 sq ft.

It alleged that 1MDB had also purchased the Sungai Besi RMAF airbase, at a rate of RM90 per sq ft.

2. Johor Sultan calls for the Johor Real Property and Housing Board Bill review

JOHOR BARU: The Sultan of Johor Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar has urged the state government to review the Johor Real Property and Housing Board Bill as it could contravene earlier state enactments.

"I do not agree with the Johor Real Property and Housing Board Bill which was passed in the previous the state assembly sitting. This is because it was amended through pressure from outsiders who were narrow minded (cetek akal) and do not understand the power of the ruler in Johor's state constitution," he said in the opening of the state legislative assembly today.

The bill, which was passed at the state legislative assembly June 14 last year, has not been endorsed by the ruler. Ten amendments had been made before the bill was tabled.

"If I approve the bill, then it would not be in line with a few other enactments which was used without problem, such as the Johor Corporation Enactment 1968.

"I urge members of the state assembly to review the bill and amend so that it is line with other enactments which have been enforced in Johor," said Sultan Ibrahim.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Saturday, 9 May, 2015

3. Hishammuddin wants Auditor-General to expedite 1MDB audit

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein has urged the Auditor-General to present the outcome of the audit on 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) as soon as possible.

He said it was necessary to expedite the completion of the auditing process in order to assure the rakyat of 1MDB's financial status.

"As such, we should not merely wait for the outcome of the Auditor-General's investigation. In this context, I urge the AG to present his report as soon as possible and forward it to the Public Accounts Committee," he said in a statement today.

Hishammuddin, who is also Defence Minister, also suggested that the 1MDB board appoint another independent international audit firm to examine, verify and disclose all its assets, liabilities, investment portfolio and cash flow statuses.

"This audit firm should also conduct a forensic audit on all 1MDB transactions since the latter's inception in order to enable 1MDB to answer all issues that had been raised.

"I'm confident that the outcome of this independent audit, as well as that of the AG will help 1MDB reassure the people of the company's financial standing," he said.

He said he maintained his previous belief that legal action should be taken if any discrepancy is found in its dealings.

Hishammuddin said he also shared the people's concern over the land deal between 1MDB and Tabung Haji Properties at the Tun Razak Exchange.

"Tabung Haji is a respectable institution; as such its integrity and investment value should be protected and should be a government priority.

"I am confident that the Tabung Haji board has calculated all business risks to ensure that the interests of all its stakeholders are prioritised.

Following widespread controversy over 1MDB, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had, on March 4, instructed the Auditor-General to independently verify 1MDB's accounts.

Najib had stressed that efforts were being made to review the government-owned strategic investment firm's finances. He had said he wasn't satisfied by the audit on 1MDB by auditing firm Deloitte, and asked for an independent audit by the Auditor-General.

The AG's report would be passed on to Public Accounts Committee, which includes members of the opposition, to ensure full transparency.

On March 10, Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang pledged that the department would give priority to undertaking the audit of the company in an independent and professional manner.

He said the auditing process would not only be confined to the accounts of 1MDB but also include the assets, liabilities, corporate governance and equities.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Sunday, 10 May, 2015

4. DPM: Opposition exploited 1MDB, GST issues in polls

MILAN: THE opposition's exploitation of national issues which the Barisan Nasional did not successfully address is among factors behind the coalition's loss in the recent Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday.

Muhyiddin, who is also BN deputy chairman, said among the issues were those related to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

He added that although the BN election machinery was committed and ran smoothly, the 1MDB issue could not be properly explained to the people and the opposition took

advantage of the opportunity to garner support.

"GST was, for example, linked to 1MDB with people claiming that the tax collected was used to bail out 1MDB. These are obvious issues which the opposition took widespread advantage of," he told the Malaysian media at a press conference here yesterday.

Muhyiddin, who arrived here on Thursday, is here on a three-day working visit.

He said this should serve as a lesson for BN to continue explaining issues to the people and enhance its delivery system.

"Other issues, such as those related to the cost of living and hudud, also affected support for BN but only slightly.

"We need to analyse our loss in Permatang Pauh and the decline in BN's majority in Rompin. BN's popularity has generally declined. There is concern that this trend will continue in the years to come.

"The 1MDB issue should not have been allowed to become so serious. If not addressed, it will bring about a huge impact in future.

"We need to take this seriously," he said, adding that the lesson learnt was the positive takeaway from BN's loss.

Muhyiddin said the people wanted the government to take decisive and concrete measures to resolve issues and problems.

"The government cannot take issues affecting the people lightly and wait until by-elections or the next general election to offer explanations. It will be too late."

5. Probe into 1MDB on May 19: Nur Jazlan

KUALA LUMPUR: Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will begin investigation into 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) on May 19, says Chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed.

He said PAC had agreed to call Ministry of Finance Secretary-General Tan Sri Irwan Serigar Abdullah and the Director-General of the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rahmat Bivi Abdullah.

On May 26, PAC would call 1MDB and Chief Executive Officer Arul Kanda Kandasamy and its predecessor CEO Datuk Shahrul Ibrahim Halmi who served the company between March 2009 until March 2013.

Nur Jazlan also said the committee was unanimous in its decision to begin its own investigation against 1MDB after a special meeting on April 30.

"During the discussions, all PAC members comprising of eight Barisan Nasional and five Opposition Members of Parliament were unanimous in agreeing to call all stakeholders involved in the management of 1MDB since its inception in 2009.

"PAC will begin investigation by calling the Treasury Secretary-General and EPU Director-General who have appeared twice before the PAC in 2012," he added.

Nur Jazlan said letters were sent to MOF and EPU on May 6 and based on parliamentary procedures and powers given to PAC, all stakeholders must appear before the committee.

He also said that the EPU replied to the May 6 letter saying that it was not involved in any of 1MDB's business decisions.

However, Nur Jazlan said representatives from EPU must appear before the PAC, as they have appeared twice before this, to explain 1MDB's investment decision involving the plot of land at the Tun Razak Exchange and Bandar Malaysia, Sungai Besi.

"We have sent another letter to EPU today to make sure they are present on May 19 together with MOF to begin investigation," he added.

"The PAC can no longer wait for the report by the Auditor-General, who was instructed to audit 1MDB's accounts on the directive of the Cabinet as there was too much speculation by the public over the investment firm's financial standing.

"We must remember that PAC, which is made up of Barisan Nasional (BN) and opposition parliamentarians, is also represented by officials from the Ministry of Finance, Auditor-General Department, Public Service Department, Accountant General Office and EPU," he said.

Nur Jazlan also said PAC was an independent and fair committee which can call for investigation on 1MDB as it was not formed under the executive branch of the Cabinet but was formed under the legislative powers of the Parliament.

He added that the PAC has not set a time limit to complete the probe on 1MDB but assured that every aspect of the company's financial management and investment would be investigated.—
BERNAMA

NEW STRAITS TIMES Tuesday, 12 May, 2015

6. 1MDB interim report by June, says A-G

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Audit Department is actively pursuing the audit of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and plans to complete it as soon as possible. In this regard, the department aims to handover its interim audit report to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the latest by June-end. "The National Audit Department is giving priority to this task," said the Auditor-General, Tan Sri Ambrin Buang in a statement here today. He was responding to various quarters, who had queried the current status of the department's audit on 1MDB.—BERNAMA

NEW STRAITS TIMES Tuesday, 12 May, 2015

7. MOF sec-gen ready to give 1MDB statement

CYBERJAYA: Finance Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah is ready to give his statement pertaining to the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) investigations. Irwan had been summoned by the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) which would commence its investigations on May 19, without waiting for the outcome of the Auditor-General's report. "I will go and give my statement as requested on the given date. "I am ready as I have nothing to hide. I'll just go," he said in a very relaxed manner. Irwan commented on the matter after attending the first anniversary celebration of the Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) here, today. PAC has also called the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) director-general Datuk Seri Dr Rahmat Bivi Abdullah to give his statement on May 19.

8. Ongkili: TNB discussing with 1MDB on stake in Project 3B

Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) is in discussion with 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) over acquiring the biggest equity in the 2000MW coal-fired power plant, known as Project 3B. Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili said the ministry was made aware of the discussion, but no conclusion had been communicated to it, thus far. "The plan is to take the biggest stake in the project, but they are still in discussion. "I think the due diligence may have been just completed and the ministry and Energy Commission would be informed accordingly," he told reporters after the launch of the Subang Tenaga Hub here today. He said any change in the project equity, approved previously, would have to be made known to the ministry and the Cabinet. According to previous reports, 1MDB owns 70 per cent of Project 3B, located in Jimah, Negeri Sembilan, and the balance by Mitsui Co Ltd. The project, with an estimated value of RM11 billion, is scheduled for commissioning in stages from Oct 1, 2018. Project 3B is adjacent to the existing Jimah Power Station in which TNB has a 25 per cent stake, and 1MDB the rest. Meanwhile, commenting on today's event, Ongkili said TNB has allocated RM18 million to set up 12 premier customer service centres called, "Tenaga Hub" to provide high quality service to customers. "TNB will spend RM1.5 million for each Tenaga Hub which will be completed by 2017, including in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Baharu," he added. On the Selangor water deal, Ongkili said he would be meeting Menteri Besar Mohamed Azmin Ali next week to discuss all disputes pertaining to the restructuring of water services industry in the state. "We need to quickly resolve the issue," he added. The timeline to finalise the proposed takeover of the water concession from Puncak Niaga (M) Sdn Bhd (PNSB) and Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas) by the state government had been delayed thrice - BERNAMA

9. 25pc doctors stress, quit during housemen

KUANTAN: Twenty-five per cent housemen who graduated from medical universities outside Malaysia were under stress to complete their housemanship in hospitals throughout the country, said Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya today.

He said stress had resulted some of the graduates to extend their housemanship training postings for years before some choose to quit.

"Those trained outside Malaysia often experienced culture shock when facing the situations in hospitals the country.

"They will need more time adapting to the working environment.

"Failure to adapt to the local hospital environment and difficulties in understanding the local medical terms also contributed to high level of stress," he told reporters after opening the national-level Occupational Safety and Health Day here today

NEW STRAITS TIMES Friday, 15 May, 2015

10. PAC need to find out what happen to the RM42 billion to pacify Malaysians

KUALA LUMPUR: The Public Accounts Committee has to pacify Malaysians by confirming whether the alleged RM42 billion was really lost by 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) as claimed by several quarters, says Sabah speaker Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak.

In a blog posting today, Salleh said some people, including former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, were demanding answers from 1MDB, but were unsatisfied when presented with them.

"I have noticed that when answers are given, these critics would brush off the response and label them as lies. They say they can no longer believe what the government says.

"That is their prerogative, of course, but if they do not believe what the government says then why demand answers?" he said.

It was best, Salleh opined, that the people let PAC complete its investigation into 1MDB and come out with its report while external auditors were doing the same.

"After all, the members of PAC comprise of opposition leader as well. So you cannot say that this is a government cover up, like what they normally say when the government issues a statement."

The allegation that 1MDB lost RM42 billion should be PAC's focus, said Salleh, and that if it is confirmed that 1MDB did not in fact lose the amount, they (PAC) would have to tell the public where the money went.

"What PAC need to do to pacify Malaysians and Dr Mahathir is to confirm if the RM42 billion was lost, and if it was lost, tell us where. Then, the matter can be put to rest," he said.

The controversy surrounding 1MDB's debt of up to RM42 billion has been lingering for months, with Mahathir adding fuel to the fire by saying last month that the act of losing the huge sum through 1MDB by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak was unforgivable and cannot be ignored.

11. 11MP; More beds requestes for Langkawi Hospital

KUALA LUMPUR: The Ministry of Health has requested for an additional 140 new beds in the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP) for use in Langkawi Hospital to overcome congestion in the hospital.

Deputy Health Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya said it was to meet the needs of approximately 120,000 inhabitants and tourists on the island, deemed more pressing at the moment.

"The ministry understands the problem, with a growing population and tourists, the need is greater.

"For this purpose we have made an urgent request for 140 new beds under the 11MP," he said in reply to a question by Datuk Nawawi Ahmad (BN-Langkawi) at the Dewan Rakyat here today.

To alleviate overcrowding at present, the ministry had allocated a 'standby fee' of RM60,000 a month to transfer emergency cases to Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital via water ambulance, he added.

On average there are 15 to 30 emergency cases referred to Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital each month and transferred from the Kuah Jetty at Kuala Kedah costing RM3,500 for each case.

Currently there are 110 beds at Langkawi Hospital and the bed occupancy rate is 90 per cent, he said.—BERNAMA

12. "1MDB documents always available to public"

1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) has clarified that the company's Memorandum and Articles of Association have always been available to the public. Its president and group executive director Arul Kanda said these documents, along with the company's financial accounts, can be viewed via the Companies Commission Malaysia. "Any suggestion that these documents were leaked, or that the details contained within them have not been previously disclosed, are false and we regret that insinuations are being made to this effect," he said in a statement issued yesterday.