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RM188m DEAL

> Tabung Haji UNDER FIRE for exorbitant land buy from 1MDB

BY **LEE CHOON FAI** AND
SHAHRIM TAMRIN

PETALING JAYA: A day after denying that it had purchased land from iMalaysia Development Berhad (iMDB), Lembaga Tabung Haji (LTH) yesterday clarified that it had bought a parcel of land at the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) for RM188.5 million.

LTH chief executive Datuk Johan Abdullah in a statement yesterday confirmed that the pilgrims fund had indeed purchased a plot of land, but not two plots for RM700 million as claimed by a Reuters report and several blogs.

“The land purchase at RM188.5 million is at a discounted rate based on current market price and the deal has been evaluated by an independent professional valuation body.”

Johan stressed that it was a sound purchase in line with LTH’s strategy of investing in properties focusing on the domestic sector after going through detailed risk assessments.

He also denied that LTH had also acquired Signature Tower (phase 2) adding leaked proposal papers cannot be considered as evidence of final decisions made by the fund.

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Mufti expresses concern over LTH deal

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► **FROM FRONT PAGE**

On Wednesday, LTH chairman Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim denied the claim of the iMDB land purchase spread on social media.

Yesterday, however, Azeez rectified the matter in his Twitter @azeezputera: "Yes. Sorry for the miscommunication. It's not true about the 722 million acquiring the 2 lots ... That's what I denied."

Meanwhile, Perlis mufti Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin expressed concern over the LTH deal with iMDB, as well as several other issues related to iMDB, as highlighted by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Mohd Asri, in his Facebook posting yesterday said: "*Sekarang Tabung Haji pula dilaporkan akan membeli dari iMDB dengan satu pembelian luar biasa. Saya pun telah tanya rakan-rakan yang berada di pihak kerajaan. Tiada jawapan yang jelas dan memuaskan.*" (Now Tabung Haji has been reported to purchase from iMDB at an extraordinary deal. I already asked my friends in government. There is no clear and satisfying answer.)"

Meanwhile, Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari slammed LTH for being involved with what he called a "high-risk" investment which could potentially jeopardise the savings of millions of pilgrims.

"As my family and I are also depositors with LTH, I am shocked by this unnecessarily high-risk investment decision," Zairil said in a statement.

Zairil said if the allegations were true, the LTH chairman and the Minister in Prime Minister's Department in charge of Islamic Affairs Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom should resign.

Malaysia Islamic Youth Movement (Abim) president Amidi Abd Manan urged the police or the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to investigate.

"If the allegations are proven to be true, then it would be worse than the Port Klang Free Zone scandal as this involves pilgrims savings towards performing their haj.