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Former editor will be asked to name sources

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Police will call The Sun former editor Andy Ng to reveal his sources if he still stands by the controversial story on a plot to assassinate the Prime Minister and his deputy.

Federal Criminal Investigations Department deputy director I Datuk Musa Hassan said Ng who resigned yesterday over the controversial story must substantiate the story with strong evidence.

"Let him stand by his story. We will investigate and call him to show proof," he said when asked to comment on a front page story in The Malay Mail today.

It quoted Ng as saying that he stood by his tabloid's Christmas Day story about an alleged plot by some local politicians to assassinate Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Ng told The Malay Mail that all the regular checks had been made in pursuing the controversial story.

He said they had it weeks before publication and even verified the facts with a deputy minister and deputy Press secretary.

Meanwhile, Musa said more editors and reporters from The Sun may be quizzed to facilitate investigations into the matter.

Police officers, if any, who provided false information to journalists from The Sun would also be questioned.

Since the article quoted police sources, the probe could be extended to include police officers.

"However, the investigations are still preliminary. But we expect to complete it within the next 14 days," he said when asked if more staff from the English tabloid had been quizzed by the police.

He added that the media would be informed about the findings of the investigation.

The Federal Police started their investigation on Wednesday when they interviewed chief news editor Robert Ho, reporter R. Manirajan and photographer Anita Md Nasir.

Yesterday, Manirajan, the writer of the page one story had his statements recorded for the second time.

Asked if the trio and other editors and reporters would be interviewed, Musa said the three and other staff of the newspaper would be called when required.

On Christmas Day, The Sun carried a front page report which alleged that the police had uncovered a plot to assassinate Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Abdullah.

The report, among other things, said a group of local politicians had hired a hitman to carry out the "job" in a month or two, and that the police were taking pre-emptive measures.

In the days following the report, the tabloid's managing editor Chong Cheng Hai was suspended while editor Andy Ng and editor-in-chief H'ng Hung Yong resigned.

Ho, Manirajan and Anita have been suspended indefinitely.
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