

Najib wants WSJ to confirm claims in 14 days
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has commenced legal action against The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) on its report that US\$700 million (RM2.6 billion) of 1MDB funds were deposited into his private bank accounts.

However, instead of the customary letter of demand, Najib's legal team sent an e-mail to the Dow Jones, the owner of WSJ, requesting that its publication confirm whether it stood by its report.

The prime minister gave the publication 14 days to respond.

"We are instructed by our client to seek confirmation as to whether it is your position, as taken in the articles, that our client misappropriated nearly US\$700 million from 1MDB?"

"We are instructed to procure your position because the articles collectively suggest that you are unsure of the 'original source of the money and what happened to the money' whilst on the other hand, the general gist of the articles create a clear impression that our client has misappropriated US\$700 million belonging to 1MDB," the e-mailed letter states.

The letter was prepared by Hafarizam Wan & Aisha Mubarak, the legal firm that is handling several other defamation suits for Najib.

WSJ may be sued

The letter zoomed in on two articles titled "Malaysia leader's accounts probed" published on July 2 and "Scandal in Malaysia" published on July 6, both authored by Simon Clark and Tom Wright.

"In the circumstances and in the interest of our client, we would expect a newspaper of your international standing and reputation to state unequivocally and with clarity as to whether it is your contention that our client misappropriated about US\$700 million belonging to 1MDB.

"You will no doubt appreciate the seriousness of the allegation made against our client in the said articles and confirmation is sought to enable us to advise our client the appropriate legal recourse he can take to seek redress in relation to the publication of these articles," reads the legal letter.

The letter also indicated that both the publication and authors may be sued.

"Please let us know whether you have appointed solicitors in Malaysia to accept service of legal proceedings on your behalf and on behalf of the reporters who wrote the articles in the event that legal proceeding becomes necessary," the e-mail adds.

Meanwhile, Reuters quoted Najib's law firm as saying in a statement that since the article involved several parties, they were instructed to consider "joint action, or action against, in the event evidence shows a conspiracy against our client."

"This is not a straightforward legal action due to the national and international imputations. We have been instructed to identify facts and lay full facts, before our client, is able to proceed with further instructions," it said.

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