

'Police act to probe WSJ shames the country'

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The action of the police to investigate the US business daily The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) for reporting the transfer of RM2.6 billion from 1MDB into the bank accounts of Prime Minister Najib Razak has brought shame to the country.

National Oversight and Whistleblowers (NOW) founder Rafizi Ramli and its executive director Akmal Nasir said this in a joint statement today.

Rafizi and Akmal likened the order issued by Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Khalid Abu Bakar to investigate WSJ under Section 4 of the Computer Crimes Act 1997 for revealing the information as "intimidation".

"Such intimidation against an international media agency like WSJ will only lower the integrity of police and further shame the country," they said.

The investigation by the police appears to be an act to divert attention from the main issue of whether the money was transferred into Najib's bank accounts.

"The inspector-general acted swiftly to order the investigation into how the information was leaked, as though he is more interested to find against WSJ," Rafizi and Akmal claimed.

On the part of the police, they said, the investigation against both 1MDB and Najib seems to have bumped into a dead road.

"The IGP's justification that the WSJ report could threaten and sabotage the country's economy does not make sense," they said.

The rakyat should be thankful to WSJ for exposing the irregularities in 1MDB, Rafizi and Akmal said.

Focus on Najib and 1MDB

"NOW wishes to remind the authorities to focus their investigations into Najib and 1MDB, rather than to find ways to penalise whistleblowers," they added.

Meanwhile, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said Najib has notched up another precedent by sending a lawyer's letter that is ambivalent on whether he intends to sue WSJ or not.

Najib's lawyers have asked the owner of WSJ, Dow Jones, to respond on "whether it is your position, as taken in the articles, that our client misappropriated nearly US\$700 million from 1MDB", Lim said.

"If Umno supreme council member Tajuddin Abdul Rahman (photo) is right that WSJ never implicated Najib, but only 1MDB, such a letter should not have been sent," he said.

The people do not expect various threats of legal action against WSJ for its report, the veteran politician added.

"I do not know what is going to be WSJ's response. But under these circumstances, nobody can rule out a scenario that the report remains while no legal action is instituted by Najib's lawyers.

"There appears to be room for dispute as to whether the WSJ report, as it stands, is defamatory of Najib or not," he said.

"So where does the government and the nation go from here?" asked Lim, who is also Gelang Patah MP.

It is crystal clear that Malaysia cannot afford to have a prime minister who has been stripped of all credibility, moral authority and legitimacy as the head of government, he said.

For the good of the country, Malaysia must move forward and cannot continue, even for another day, in the state of government morass and national paralysis induced by the 1MDB scandal and crisis, Lim added.

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