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Malaysian Premier Faces Ouster Motion

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Opposition cites corruption allegations at IMDB, Najib's response to probe

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Malaysia's opposition filed a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Najib Razak, citing allegations of corruption at a state investment fund and the prime minister's response to the investigation into possible wrongdoing.

The motion has little chance of being approved by Malaysia's parliament, where the ruling party's coalition holds a majority. But the filing of the motion on Thursday by Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, leader of Malaysia's opposition coalition, marks the first formal challenge in Parliament to Mr. Najib's rule amid the scandal at **IMalaysia Development Bhd.**, or **IMDB**.

Mr. Najib set up **IMDB** in 2009 to spur economic growth. Investigators in five countries are looking into the fund amid accusations that billions of dollars are missing and that money was misused for political purposes ahead of a tight election in 2013.

Ms. Wan Azizah said the no-confidence motion was

aimed at Mr. Najib personally and not the government. "One man is the cause of the crisis of confidence in the integrity of our country's sovereignty, independence and dignity," she said.

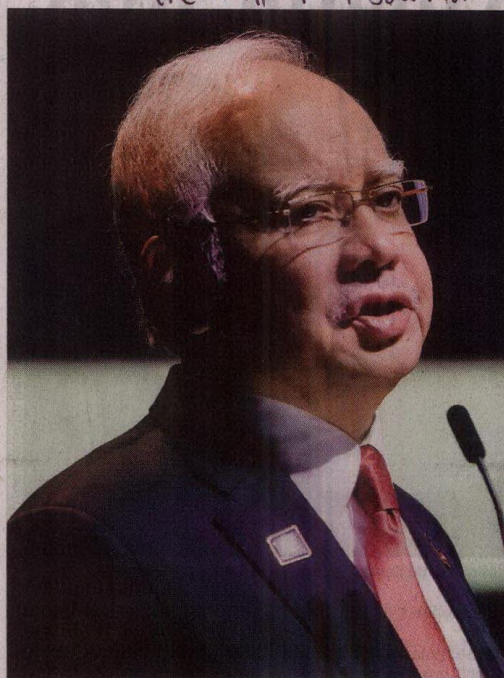
She blamed Mr. Najib for interfering in investigations into **IMDB**, including removing from office an attorney general as well as a deputy prime minister who questioned the government's handling of the affair.

Ms. Wan Azizah's husband is former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who is in prison following a sodomy conviction he says was politically motivated.

Malaysian investigators have traced deposits of almost \$700 million into the prime minister's alleged personal accounts via agencies, banks and companies linked to **IMDB**, *The Wall Street Journal* reported in July.

The original source of the funds was unclear, and the government investigation didn't detail what happened to the money that allegedly went into Mr. Najib's accounts.

Malaysia's anticorruption agency has said the money was a donation from the Middle East but hasn't named the donor. Mr. Najib has denied wrongdoing or taking any



Prime Minister Najib speaking in in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday.

ditor general and a parliamentary committee. Authorities in the U.S., Abu Dhabi, Singapore and Switzerland also are probing money flows related to **IMDB**.

"In terms of claims of wrongdoing, there are a number of investigations, some in Malaysia, which I myself ordered, and others by international authorities, which I welcome," Mr. Najib said, local media reported. The "strictest action" would be taken against anyone found to have done wrong, he added.

Attempts to reach Mr. Najib's office Thursday weren't successful.

It is unclear whether the opposition's motion will come up for debate in the current parliamentary session, which opened on Monday and ends in December.

Some opposition figures said privately it was unlikely the motion would receive the simple majority needed to unseat Mr. Najib in the 222-member Parliament. The opposition coalition has only 88 seats.

Mr. Najib continues to appear secure at the helm of the United Malays National Organization, which has ruled the nation since independence from Britain in 1957, said Ibrahim Suffian, a program director at the Merdeka Center, a

Kuala Lumpur-based think tank.

"He is not under immediate threat within his own party," Mr. Ibrahim said. "There isn't any kind of doubt as to where the power lies at this moment in time."

Still, Mr. Najib's government is facing increased pressure.

Tens of thousands of Malaysians protested against the prime minister in August. The nation's sultans, who are ceremonial heads of Malaysia's states, this month urged a swift and transparent investigation into the **IMDB** fund.

The **IMDB** scandal has led to open sniping between different arms of the Malaysian government.

Malaysia's central bank said this month it had recommended the attorney general open criminal proceedings against **IMDB** for breaking foreign exchange rules in seeking to invest \$1.83 billion overseas.

In response, Malaysia's new attorney general, Mohamed Apandi Ali, whom Mr. Najib brought in after replacing predecessor Abdul Gani Patail in July, said there had not been any breach of the rules and declined to pursue criminal charges. The central bank then vowed to seek administrative fines in the matter.

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