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LAW

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alleged private bank accounts via companies, banks and agencies linked to 1Malaysia Development Bhd., the investment fund.

The fund has also amassed \$11 billion in debts since Mr. Najib started it in 2009 to help boost the economy. Its woes have dragged down the leader's popularity, sparked a two-day street protest against his rule and led to other international investigations.

Mr. Najib has denied any wrongdoing or using money for personal gain. Malaysia's anticorruption agency said in August the funds were a political donation from someone from the Middle East, but didn't identify the donor nor say how the money was used.

Responding to questions from lawmakers on Thursday, Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi repeated the explanation that the funds were a political donation, saying such practices are legal. He didn't specify where the funds came from or how the funds were used.

1MDB, as the fund is known, has denied wrongdoing and has said it is cooperating with investigators.

Some members of the ruling party, the UMNO, say they are concerned. "We feel it is time for him to give somebody else the chance to lead the party," said Kamarul Aznan Habibur Rahman, a local party leader outside Kuala Lumpur. He is a member of a coalition that claims 1,000 grass-roots party members who are urging

Mr. Najib's departure both as party chief and prime minister, as has former Premier Mahathir Mohamad.

Muhyiddin Yassin, a former deputy prime minister whom Mr. Najib fired in late July after he questioned the prime minister's role in 1MDB, said in a speech to supporters on Sunday that the party stands to lose power in the next election, which must be held by 2018.

"This is the reality facing UMNO as a result of the present leadership, due to 1MDB," Mr. Muhyiddin said, stopping short of calling for Mr. Najib's resignation. Mr. Najib's office in July said Mr. Muhyiddin, who is still the UMNO's deputy president, was removed to improve government unity.

Mr. Najib's supporters say they are confident he can survive as leader of the UMNO until the next national vote. One person familiar with the matter said he intended to eventually install trusted loyalist and Deputy Premier Za-

hid Hamidi as his party heir.

"Mr. Najib," this person said, "is playing a long game."

People familiar with the situation say Mr. Najib has carefully tended his party support base, mainly the party's 191 division leaders across the country. He has used his clout to ensure that key supporters retain their positions on the UMNO's ruling Supreme Council. The next party vote is due at next year's end.

Critics say Mr. Najib has also used a variety of tools, including the country's sedition and restrictive publishing laws, to stifle dissent outside the ruling party.

The new National Security Council Law, passed by 107 votes to 77, allows the prime minister to suspend limits on police actions in declared security zones, effectively enabling Mr. Najib to grant himself the power of emergency rule, opponents said.

"It allows the kind of power which is normally associated with martial law," said Rafizi

Ramli, secretary-general of the opposition People's Justice Party said. "While touted as a law to protect national security, the law provides expansive powers that could fundamentally threaten human rights and democratic rule," said Phil Robertson of Human Rights Watch in a statement.

The Malaysian government didn't respond to requests to comment on its use of its security and sedition laws.

The opposition alliance narrowly lost the last national elections in 2013, but began to fragment after opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison in February in a prosecution he says was politically motivated.

CORRECTIONS & AMPLIFICATIONS

Siemens SA has said it complies with U.S. sanctions on Iran, but the company is no longer listed in the U.S. A Business & Tech article Tuesday about German companies that do business in Iran incorrectly said Siemens is among German multinationals listed in the U.S. that have acknowledged they have little choice but to comply with U.S. sanctions on Tehran.

The name of luxury-property rental company UltraVilla was misspelled as UtraVilla in an Off Duty article in the Nov. 27-29 edition about private-island vacations.

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