

Dr M files lawsuit against PM Najib
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By The Rakyat Post

KUALA LUMPUR, Former Malaysian premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has filed a suit against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, alleging corruption and “misfeasance and breach of fiduciaries” in public office, his law firm said in a statement today.

But it is unlikely to have any immediate impact as it will take months before any case is heard.

Najib has come under criticism over as-yet-unsubstantiated allegations of corruption linked to the debt-laden state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and deposits into his private accounts worth around US\$680 million (RM2.6 billion).

He has denied any wrongdoing, maintains that he did not use the funds for personal gain and this year he was cleared of any criminal offence or corruption.

The minister of communications in Najib’s government said Dr Mahathir’s accusations were false. “He is clutching at straws... Mahathir has run out of options.”

The law firm’s statement accused Najib of “carrying out various steps that were actively and deliberately taken in bad faith ... to obstruct, interfere, impede and derail the various investigations and inquiries which were being conducted by various legal enforcement agencies”.

In the lawsuit filed in Kuala Lumpur High Court, Dr Mahathir was joined by Datuk Seri Khairuddin Abu Hassan and Anina Saadudin, former members of the United Malay National Organisation (Umno) which Najib heads.

Dr Mahathir had on March 4 joined hands with long-standing foes, including the party of the jailed Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, to crank up pressure on Najib to quit.

In a dramatic flourish, Dr Mahathir read a statement signed by 58 politicians and anti-corruption activists at a news conference where he was flanked by opposition leaders and some members of the ruling party he has now quit.

The plaintiffs in today’s suit are seeking exemplary damages from Najib to the government of RM2.6 billion and aggravated damages of RM42 million – equal to the amounts that were allegedly deposited into Najib’s bank account.

Dr Mahathir’s lawyer Haniff Khatri said it would take three months for the court to decide if the case would be heard. “We don’t go with empty hands, (we) have material, witnesses and we are confident of the outcome.”

But political analysts weren’t optimistic.

“The real impact is very limited in the sense of legal terms,” said Ibrahim Suffian, director of independent opinion polling firm Merdeka Centre. “This is going to be battle that is drawn out for a longer period.”

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