



by Charles Raj

AS NEW twists emerge almost weekly in the tussle for control of conglomerate DRB-Hicom, there is also emerging a disturbing trend of conflicting Press reports.

Not only that, there is also talk of interference by powerful forces as the protracted dispute between a Tan Sri SM Nasimuddin SM Amin-led consortium and Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary continues to escalate.

If you have been reading certain newspapers, you would have been informed by now — twice in fact — that Nasimuddin had won the bid. It was to have been a scoop.

When a Scoop is not a Scoop

We seem to be reading conflicting reports about the ongoing tussle for the strategic stake in conglomerate DRB-Hicom in the local dailies every week. Is journalistic integrity being compromised here?

In journalistic jargon, this basically means that you break an important story before your rivals do.

But at the time of writing, the dispute as to who will control the strategic 15.82% stake in

If you are following the tussle closely through the mainstream newspapers, you would be forgiven for thinking that the Prime Minister had said different things to different newspapers at different times.

So, one can say that misreporting Abdullah's statements amounts to lampooning the Prime Minister. Surely, this can't be responsible journalism?

Such reports only lead to confusing readers. Let us look at some of these reports that have appeared the past few weeks:

- Nasimuddin claimed victory after the family of the late Tan Sri Yahya Ahmad said it had decided to sell the shares to the consortium.
- A week later, Syed Mokhtar said he was given the mandate by the majority of the shareholders who control the 15.82% strategic stake.
- Members of Yahya's family claim they are sole owners of the entire 15.82% stake while Syed Mokhtar claims the family only controls 40% of the stake.

DRB-Hicom had yet to be settled.

The funny thing is, each time a newspaper reports that one party had won, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would clarify that he was hopeful of an amicable solution. In spinning the web, some newspapers seem to have spun a web around themselves.

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Not a done deal

