

'No privacy violation' in PM's CNY message
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has denied violating individual privacy when sending his unsolicited Chinese New Year message by text message service and email.

In a parliamentary written reply to Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah, right), Najib said a total of 4 million text messages and 1,255,528 email greetings had been sent.

Najib said that, in both instances, he did not have access to individual information.

He said the phone text message was delivered free of charge by three telecommunications companies - Digi Bhd, Maxis Bhd and Celcom Bhd - as part of their corporate social responsibility.

"The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had ensured that the principle of ensuring individual privacy is respected in line with the terms and conditions of the telecommunication companies," he said.

"We stress that the PMO does not have access to individual information of the recipients at any time."

Data-sharing condition

The email addresses were sourced from conglomerate Media Prima Bhd, the Higher Education Ministry and Najib's own 1Malaysia website.

Again, it was argued that the email addresses were handled by the company, the ministry and the website administrators and thus the PMO had no access to individual information.

Najib cited Media Prima's condition on data-sharing which states that the company reserves the right to share information with third parties which "might attract individual interest".

"It is clear that the premier's Chinese New Year message does not violate the company's privacy policy. In this context, the premier is classified as 'third party which might attract individual interest'," said Najib.

The emails were sent out at a total cost of RM62,776, or 5 sen each.

"At a minimal cost, the premier managed to get close to more than a million Malaysians of various races and creeds. Such greetings were similar to conventional greeting cards," he added.