

Najib gets bad press abroad ahead of UN address

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is attracting negative headlines in leading publications abroad ahead of his address at the United Nations general debate in New York on Oct 1.

Asia correspondents in top Canadian and Australian newspapers are zeroing in on Najib's "alleged scandals", with Canada's The Globe and Mail describing the PM as having "flailed desperately".

The Sydney Morning Herald headline ominously reads: "Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak's inevitable fall".

In a scathing semi-analysis yesterday, The Globe and Mail's Asia Pacific correspondent Iain Marlow accused Najib of being "unfit to lead a democracy" and ruling as a "pseudo-authoritarian".

"Despite other actions that make him (Najib) unfit to lead a democracy, such as repeatedly jailing his main political opponent, a former deputy prime minister, on trumped up sodomy charges, he now finds himself at the centre of an ever-expanding series of corruption probes that have brought Malaysian politics to a standstill - and also threaten to bring his pseudo-authoritarian rule to an end," Marlow wrote.

Najib's leadership is "untenable", even if investigations into 1MDB locally and abroad find anything untoward, he wrote.

Similarly, Sydney Morning Herald's Southeast Asia correspondent Lindsay Murdoch wrote that Australia is "set to lose its heavy bet" on Najib, having earlier been swayed by his moderate, reformist international persona.

Like Marlow, Murdoch described Malaysian politics as having descended into "dysfunction" with Najib in Seri Perdana.

Najib has "used blunt force" to stymie investigations into the RM2.6 billion found in his bank account, while "refusing to explain what happened to the money", he wrote.

"Najib's fall - whenever it eventually comes - will impact Australia's foreign policy priorities at a time Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is pledging to take advantage of the Asian Century through innovation, science and technology," Murdoch wrote.

Last week, leading United States newspaper The Washington Post in an editorial urged US President Barack Obama to reconsider his friendly relations with Najib.

The editorial, which came days after the Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu rally, said Najib is "pandering to racists and Muslim extremists".

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