

**False news ruins the country, Najib reminds media**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today reminded media practitioners to be careful when reporting unproven allegations because it could ruin the country.

He said the media should realise that while bad news could drive hits and circulation, it did not help develop society.

"The main goal is we must develop our country. We want to progress, so our people's level of thinking must also reach a certain intellectual level – educate the public to be thinking, discerning.

"Our goal is not to sensationalise things, especially false news. If this is our goal, then we are doing a disservice in Malaysia," he said.

He said this in a speech at Umno-owned daily Utusan Malaysia's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Najib said the government was accused of being autocratic if it took action against the media but it could not keep quiet as circulation of false information has severe consequences on the nation.

"We must have balance, there must be a guideline," he said.

He added that the media must play a role to assist the government in moving the country forward by reporting only the truth.

"The media play a very important role, but it must be anchored on truth and to report responsibly in the context of the environment it operates.

"If we use this as our guide, then we will be able to provide fast, accurately and responsibly, and fulfil the role of assisting the government to meet our goals," he said.

Critics have condemned the Najib administration for being heavy-handed against the media, especially in the reporting of the 1MDB scandal.

Journalists from *The Malaysian Insider* and its sister publication *The Edge* were **detained** following their reports on 1MDB, while *The Edge*'s print permit was **suspended**.

The business daily went back to print after it **won a court challenge** against the suspension, but was forced **to shut down** the online publication *The Malaysian Insider* to maintain its bottom-line.

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission **blocked access** to the *Malaysian Insider* prior to its closure, resulting in severe loss in advertising revenue.

Najib is also became the first Malaysian prime minister to file a defamation suit against a news organisation, when he sued news portal *Malaysiakini* over a compilation of readers' comments.

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