

# DPM: Govt will not interfere in MAS

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BY SIMON KHOO

**PEKAN:** The Government will not meddle in the affairs of the national air carrier, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He added that Malaysia Airlines (MAS) was capable of making its own decisions without outside interference.

"We don't micro-manage MAS. They have their own board of directors and management staff. They can decide on what is best for the company," he said yesterday.

He was asked to comment on the move by MAS to relocate some 600 staff from the present headquarters in Kuala Lumpur to Subang and the KL

International Airport.

The move was seen as a sign that MAS would proceed to sell the building or rent out the premises to cut operation costs.

Najib was speaking to reporters at his residence in Peramu here after distributing cattle to be slaughtered on Hari Raya Aidiladha.

On a separate matter, Najib reminded the press to be more accountable in their reporting.

He was commenting on the resignation of two key editors of *China Press* over an inaccurate report on the controversial nude ear-squat incident.

The daily had reported that the woman asked to do the squat was a Chinese national but it was later found

she was a local Malay woman.

Najib said action by the authorities had nothing to do with racial sentiments but was aimed at repairing the damage done to the country.

"The press must always be careful in reporting issues which could affect national interests. If they have yet to confirm the news, then it must not be published as though it is the truth," he added.

Citing the incident, Najib said it had created a negative image for the country and caused severe damage to the tourism industry.

"Our aim is to encourage more tourists, especially those from China, to visit Malaysia but what took place had hampered the efforts," he said.