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Stick to the facts, media told

PM: Be fair, seek the truth
and avoid inaccurate reporting

SHAH ALAM: Media practitioners have been advised to ensure that the news that they report is accurate and truthful.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said they should not chase news simply to become the first to report it

"We must seek the truth," he said at a *buka puasa* gathering with the media at Kompleks Karangraf here yesterday.

"That's all I ask. Be fair and seek the truth," he said.

He acknowledged that in any democracy, there would be differences in opinions.

"These differences would not be a problem if they were constructive, but it is a serious problem when the opinions are baseless allegations," he added.

Najib said this was the current challenge in the new environment where those in the media clambered to be the first to deliver their news, resulting in accuracy being compromised.

"They want to chase the news to make it go viral as opposed to the veracity of the information," he said.

The Prime Minister noted that such inaccurate news reporting shaped public perception, which was hard to dispel

once it had gone viral.

Najib cited as example the alleged 40,000 phantom Bangladeshi voters during the 13th general election that damaged Barisan Nasional's chances at the polls.

"Imagine, one jumbo jet can ferry 400 passengers, so you need 100 planes to ferry the 40,000 Bangladeshi here.

"However, the news had gone viral and the damage was done," he said.

He also said that news of the sale of land by Malaysia Development Bhd to Lembaga Tabung Haji as a government bailout negatively affected Barisan a day before the Permatang Pauh by-election.

He also took what appeared to be an indirect swipe at Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the IMDB issue. "If we say billions were lost, we need to verify it."

Earlier, when presenting Hari Raya contributions to the poor from the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP) in Serdang, Najib said a person's place in heaven was not guaranteed if he instigated and slandered others.

He said it was pointless for a Muslim to pray five times a day, but continue to instigate others at other times.



Helping hand: Najib greeting Hari Raya aid recipients after handing over contributions from the MAIWP in Serdang. — AZHAR MAHFOF / The Star