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'Tempo' criticised over article on Najib

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BASELESS: Factually inaccurate, says our envoy to Jakarta in interview with TV3

ADRIAN LAI
KUALA LUMPUR
adrianlai@nst.com.my

MALAYSIAN Ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Seri Zahrain Mohamed Hashim has criticised Indonesian magazine *Tempo* for publishing an article accusing Prime Minister Najib Razak

of enjoying a lavish lifestyle.

He said the article, published last week in a special issue, was factually inaccurate.

Zahrain, in an interview with TV3, was reacting to the article about the spending habits of Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, which implied that they could afford a lavish lifestyle because the prime minister was of upper-class birth.

"We all know that Najib comes from a family of noblemen. His grandfather, the country's first Speaker of Parliament, was a rich man during his time," Zahrain said in the interview aired on Thursday.

Zahrain said it was his duty as ambassador to defend the integrity

of Malaysia and its leaders when baseless accusations were hurled against them.

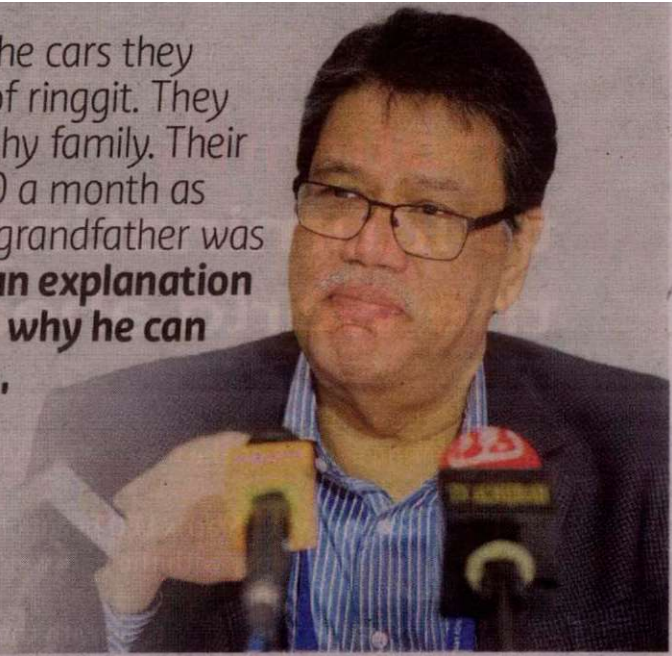
Tempo had reported on the lavish lifestyle of Najib and Rosmah in a special issue following the 60th anniversary -celebrations of the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, which Najib attended last week.

Zahrain said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's sons, too, were known for their lavish lifestyles.

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Malaysian Ambassador to Indonesia



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"I need an explanation from Dr Mahathir as to why he can question Najib's wealth, when his own sons are living lavishly," Zahrain said without toaming the sons.

In Penang, Dr Mahathir yesterday denied claims that he had made his children "overnight billionaires".

Speaking during a press conference after attending a forum at Universiti Sains Malaysia yesterday

evening, Dr Mahathir said he played no role in the accumulation of his children's wealth.

"If I wanted to help them when I was prime minister, I would have done so. But I stopped them from entering politics and they could not do business with the government. That was why they could not rise. Now that I am no longer PM, they can rise," he said.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a reporter's question on allegations by certain Umno leaders that his criticisms against the government had impacted his sons' businesses.