

**Kompas Newspaper Apologises To Najib And Family
Bernama
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JAKARTA, Aug 21 (Bernama) -- Indonesia's Kompas newspaper today apologised to Malaysian prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak and his family for its defamatory news report published on Aug 4.

The report had linked Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor with a business company and a US\$24 million diamond ring alleged to have been ordered by her, which the prime minister had denied.

The report had also linked the prime minister's future in-laws to the Russian mafia.

According to the newspaper's Sunday edition, Kompas editor-in-chief Rikard Bagun had on Saturday here apologised to the Malaysian prime minister and his family over the news report.

The apology was contained in paragraph 10, page 10 of the edition in a report with the heading, "PM Najib Razak: Demokrasi Juga Terjadi di Malaysia" (PM Najib Razak: Democracy Also Exists in Malaysia) written by senior reporter Jimmy S. Harianto.

Harianto when contacted by Bernama last Friday said he had also personally apologised to Najib when he met the prime minister at the Finance Ministry in Putrajaya on Thursday.

During the meeting, Najib had expressed his shock over the Aug 4 report in Kompas, saying that it was not true at all. This was noted by Harianto in his article today.

"What more this involves the good name of the leader of a neighbouring country and where our relations are important," Najib was further quoted as saying.

During the meeting with Najib, Harianto also had a special interview with the prime minister on bilateral relations between Malaysia and Indonesia.

When asked about Malaysia's hopes on Indonesia as a neighbouring country and Asean chair this time, Najib said he hoped for very close relations between the two countries which shared a cultural heritage and were also close historically.

"Our cultural, religious and family ties (Najib is an 11th generation descendant of Gowa nobility in South Celebes)," he had noted.

"Surely Malaysia-Indonesia relations are based on more special and unique factors, and we should translate what we have inherited as legacy in the form of our relations in the context of the present day. It should be mutually beneficial."

The prime minister also believed that the maritime border issue between the two countries could be resolved, but said both must be willing to compromise to reach a political solution to the issue.

On democracy, Harianto's article quoted Najib as saying that democracy as practised in Malaysia was a system that had gone through a process of evolution but principally, there was no immunity even for the ruling party.

"When there is a general election, the ruling party and the opposition are in the same position. Our fate are in the people's hands, there is no manipulation of results. The people determine the number of votes (received)."

Najib also said that what always became polemic was the definition of openness as the government and opposition had their own opinions on it, but the basic principle was the people's right to choose a government in a free and fair manner.

"Democracy exists in Malaysia. The ruling party had experienced defeat at the state level before but not at the federal level," he said.

On Barisan Nasional's (BN) chances in the coming general election, the prime minister was reported as saying that the people's confidence in BN was increasing based on the results of several by-elections held, but BN was not seeing the results as something absolute.

Therefore, he said, BN continued to work hard on agendas and programmes that could give satisfaction and confidence to the people, especially during the current global inflation phenomenon, linked to the hike in world food prices.

"These are issues that we need to tackle. No less important is to keep communication open with the people," he said.

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