

## **Ascertain the truth before you report something, says PM**

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**By Fernando Fong**

KUALA LUMPUR, The media are partners of the government in developing the country to be a success and one that Malaysians can be proud of, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

He said the media were not just middlemen who reported the news but were also the ones responsible for shaping the minds of the people so that they can truly understand government policies.

“The media must ascertain the truth before they report something.

“By all means criticise, but let it be constructive, based on solid facts which will be beneficial to all.

“We also depend on the media to inform us on the feedback of the people,” said Najib in his speech during a media night hosted by the Prime Minister tonight at Dewan Perdana Felda here.

He pointed out the new reality in the sense that people can no longer deal and respond to an issue within 24 hours.

Nowadays, when news are spread especially on social media, the response time is only two hours or perhaps just 20 minutes, said Najib.

“This is the reality which we need to respond quickly to before readers accept as the truth the news they hear first.”

Najib also noted that readers nowadays were attracted to pictures and captions, including cartoons.

At the same time, he highlighted that the use of smartphones in Malaysia currently stand at 140% compared with the population, even ahead of the United States.

“The use of applications such as WhatsApp and WeChat are increasingly popular.

“We need to know what is trending and what is viral so that we would not be left behind playing catch up.”

The Prime Minister reminded the media to adhere to five important qualities including to act professionally and responsibly, deliver views and criticisms which are constructive and report issues based on real and accurate facts and not hearsay, despite intense pressure to deliver breaking news.

He also advised the media stay away from sensitive issues which were slanderous in nature.

“The media are part and parcel of nation building and hence the need to instill good qualities and universal values such as mutual respect for one another.”

The media night was attended by various ministers and civil servants.

The occasion was also graced by the Prime Minister’s wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

Hundreds of prizes were up grabs in a lucky draw during the night, including the grand prize of a Peugeot 408.

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