

**Fairfax Media Article Desperate Attempt To Link Najib To Bribery Scandal – PMO
Bernama
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 15 (Bernama) -- Australia's Fairfax Media group has published an article that is a desperate attempt to link Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to a bribery scandal, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

While full of smears and insinuations, the article appearing in The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald on Tuesday contains not a single direct allegation against the Prime Minister.

Describing the article as "deliberately misleading, malicious and defamatory", the Prime Minister instructed his legal counsel to take "all action possible" against the two Fairfax Media newspapers.

In a statement here today, the PMO said Najib totally rejects the baseless smears and insinuations in the article "Bribery scandal linked to Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak."

"This is a desperate attempt to link the work he did when he was Deputy Prime Minister - which involved countless trade missions to promote Malaysia abroad, and meeting thousands of people - with the alleged wrongdoings of middlemen who may have happened to have been in the same room as him at some time or another," it said.

The article did not contain a single direct allegation against Najib because there was none to be made, the statement said.

"There is not one shred of evidence that the Prime Minister was in any way involved in the case that the courts have already made judgement on, with individuals convicted and punished."

The statement added: "Instead of providing evidence to link the Prime Minister to the case, the article relies heavily on a series of slippery, non-conclusive words - 'suspected', 'alleged', 'suggesting' - to lead the reader into thinking that the Prime Minister is guilty by association.

"This is grossly defamatory, and this sly and underhand way of attempting to tarnish the Prime Minister's name is underlined by the fact that Australian court records quoted in the article state that 'none of the named persons [including Najib and (former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad) Badawi] is a person whom the accused are alleged to have conspired to bribe."

The PMO said the article also states no overseas politicians have been charged or formally accused of conspiring to receive bribes, with the prosecution case restricted to allegations that overseas central bank officials, rather than any ministers, were bribed between 1999

and 2004.

"This is a case that has been ongoing for a long period of time and the bribes alleged to have been paid were during the administrations of Tun Abdullah and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad," it said.

Yet, the PMO noted, the Fairfax Media chose not to mention Dr Mahathir anywhere in the article.

"This is despite knowing that the alleged bribes took place not during Najib's tenure but during Tun Mahathir's and despite Tun Mahathir being named in the suppression order regarding the case obtained by the Australian government.

"Instead, the entire article including its headline and photos focuses on and smears Najib," the PMO statement said.

Fairfax Media's article published yesterday alleged that Malaysia is blocking the Australian government's requests for information over a corruption scandal.

According to the article, Malaysia has ignored a formal mutual assistance request from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department to hand over sensitive information about the financial dealings of a group of Malaysian middlemen embroiled in Australia's most important bribery case.

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