

MITI: Muhyiddin lied about Najib photo removal in Milan
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Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (pic) recently claimed at a ceramah that Najib's photo was removed to avoid embarrassing Malaysia.

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 14 — A government agency denied today Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's allegation that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's portrait was removed during an event in Milan, Italy, last year.

The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) said as one of the organisers behind the Malaysia Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015, it could confirm with all parties involved in the event that the former deputy prime minister's claim was unfounded.

"All the parties involved in organising the Malaysia Pavilion have confirmed that the claim on the alleged photo removal made by Tan Sri Muhyiddin was unfounded.

"We regret the attempt to undermine the professionalism and competence of officials involved in the management of the Expo," Matrade and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) said in a joint statement.

The Expo Milano, led by MITI, took place from May 1 to October 31, 2015. The Malaysia Pavilion was set up to showcase Malaysia to an international audience, with a special emphasis on Malaysia's sustainable development and biodiversity.

Muhyiddin recently claimed at a ceramah that Najib's photo was removed to avoid embarrassing Malaysia. This was due to the controversy surrounding state investment firm 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

His ceramah was caught on video and has since gone viral. It was reported by online news portal *Malaysiakini*.

"Malaysia's participation was an embodiment of the National Blue Ocean Strategy as it involved a concerted effort by various ministries, agencies, state governments, private sectors and the public," said Matrade.

Matrade added that the results of Malaysia's participation in the Expo over the six-month period were encouraging with 3.1 million visitors (one out of seven or 14 per cent visitors from the total 22.5 million people at Expo Milano) received at the Malaysia Pavilion.

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