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BN in no position to tell local media what it should do, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Barisan Nasional is in no position to dictate to the local media what it should or should not do, BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

If a newspaper or a television station wished to report an issue or otherwise, it was their right to do so.

He was replying to a question from a foreign reporter who asked whether the BN's access to the local media would put it in the driver's seat during the campaigning period for the Nov 29 polls.

"We cannot tell the local media what to do ... it is up to them.

"Do you think what I say is reported accurately in the Harakah or Rokat (DAP newsletter) or in any of the other mosquito newspapers.

"They only condemn the BN. Why aren't they reporting accurately what I actually say," he said.

The Prime Minister said if the other local newspapers were sympathetic towards the BN and did not wish to print what the Opposition had to say, it was their right.

"Freedom of the Press means freedom not to report what they do not want to report," he told a Press conference after addressing the BN Youth and Wanita election machinery at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir said if the Opposition claimed that they did not have enough access to the local media, the BN too did not have equal access to the foreign media.

"The foreign media praises and does everything for the Opposition but nothing for us.

"Anything we say is twisted. Even if there is show of support for the Government, you are going to write there is no support."

Dr Mahathir said some of the newspapers that gave prominence to the Malaysian Opposition were printed here.

"But we have never censored them although they have nothing good to say about us," he said.

If there was no freedom of Press, he said, the Government could have asked the operators of these newspapers to "get out of this country" but it did not do so.

"There is the CNBC, BBC and the CNN. Their reporting is also always biased ... and you say the Opposition has no access," Dr Mahathir said.

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