

Najib concedes Economist censorship ineffective
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak conceded today that the government's censorship of The Economist's article on Bersih last month was ineffective and promised to review its censorship methods.

"Only a few lines were censored, but the act of censoring made more news than the actual story," he said.

Najib added that such methods were no longer necessary, stating that if the government was unhappy with any reports, it could resort to legal proceedings.

"If the international media wants to criticise us, let them. If we need to, we engage them. We give our side of story, and if they have crossed the line, then we have to resort to legal means," he said.

The premier also acknowledged that censorship was no longer effective in a changing information landscape.

"If we feel we have been wronged by the media, if the media has published a story that is defamatory, then we take legal action.

"But censoring is no longer an effective means and (therefore) the government will review our policy towards censorship," he said.

Najib said the review was necessary so that the government would not be perceived as ignorant towards the changing information technology landscape.

The comments come almost a month after the Home Ministry censored the July 16 edition of The Economist.

The Home Ministry had ordered several lines on the edition's article on Bersih 2.0 rally to be deleted with black ink, leaving readers puzzled over the black lines on the news magazine.