

Nurul to file anti-PPPA bill at next House sitting
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Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar announced today that she plans to move a private member's bill to replace the Printing, Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) at the March parliament sitting.

She was responding to a member of the audience who asked her comments on the issue of a free press, as its control has a direct impact on the public by keeping them in the dark on vital issues, at a panel discussion in remembrance of Tunku Abdul Rahman in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

Nurul Izzah (left) said PPPA should be replaced with a media council similar to the British concept, but with the proviso that it comprise industry players, not ministers.

"I am against the idea of setting up a media council with the existence of PPPA because it seems to be another layer of control," she told reporters later.

On the question of politicians owning equity in media organisations, she said it would be better to provide a level-playing field rather than prohibit the practice.

"There is always bias in media publications and collusion among different bodies of the government, take the case of Rupert Murdoch in Britain for example.

"So it's better to allow all the voices to emerge, they can be pro-Malay, pro-Sabahan or pro-government like Utusan as long as unfounded reports are not published, and the government should allow them the freedom to publish what they want so long as the law is observed," the PKR vice president told some 200 attendees.

It is, however, hard for bills proposed by backbenchers to see daylight, Nurul said, saying that Parliament's normal practice is to only accept government bills.

How to strengthen liberty

She added that to strengthen the institution of liberty, the government must also activate parliament select committees (PSC) as and when public interest issues demand urgent attention.

The panel discussion also featured speakers like Barisan Nasional's Kota Belud MP Abdul Rahman Dahlan, Bar Council president Lim Chee Wee and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's principal research fellow Anis Yusal Yusoff.

When it came to Abdul Rahman's (right) turn, he took to teasing Pakatan, claiming they "never walk the talk."

"All the suggestions they made, they should implement it in the states they govern.

"I've never seen (Selangor government-funded) TV Selangor carry any report on the BN," he said.

He added that he had yet to see PSC active in all Pakatan-led states, except the Selangor Capability, Accountability and Transparency Committee (Selcat).

"How I wish the state governments under Pakatan having very active PSCs," he mocked.

He said unlike opposition MPs, BN backbenchers always worked from within, citing the deferment of

goods and services (GST) tax came as a result of his lobbying the prime minister.

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