

Guan Eng expects plunge in press freedom ranking
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The assault on several journalists during Bersih 3.0 last Saturday is likely to drag Malaysia further down the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, said the DAP today.

Its secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said there was no doubt that press freedom in the country is deteriorating and becoming more restricted.

azlan“Earlier this year, there was a short-lived joy as Malaysia gained 19 places (in the index) to 122nd place, compared to being ranked 141st in 2010.

“In actual fact, we have actually regressed because we were ranked 92nd in 2006, and have merely regained some lost ground,” he said.

Lim pointed out that being jointly ranked 122 with Tajikistan and Algeria was not something to be proud of.

“Even Cambodia fared better at rank 117,” said Lim in a press release on International Press Freedom Day.

Will the police panel work?

Lim said DAP is fully supportive of all Malaysians and journalists who were wearing black with a yellow ribbon to commemorate this auspicious day.

However, he warned that the authorities must be able to ensure that the new independent panel established by the home ministry to investigate complaints of police brutality during Bersih 3.0 will take action.

He said the public must remember that no one has been prosecuted over the assault on two journalists by a pro-Umno mob during the Feb 26 anti-Lynas rally in Penang, and another assault on two journalists during the pro-Umno demonstration on the Penang bridge last year.

In the aftermath of the Bersih 3.0, at least a dozen journalists claimed that they were assaulted by police personnel while photographing their arrest procedures, which were often very violent.

In some cases, the police allegedly confiscated memory cards and in some rare cases, destroyed the photographers' equipment.