

Curbs on portals against MSC guarantees, reminds DAP

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Malaysia should not follow the Singaporean model of regulating online portals as this will violate the Malaysian Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) Bill of Guarantees on no Internet censorship, says the DAP.

"DAP regrets that newly-minted Communications and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek is starting off his tenure by breaking BN's earliest promise of not censoring the Internet by wanting to regulate online portals.

"Where is BN's 'Janji ditepati'?" DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng asked in a statement today.

The MSC programme was launched in 1996 by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad to boost the development of information technology in the country.

It contains 10 bills of guarantees, including no censorship of the Internet.

Lim urged Ahmad Shabery to grant freedom to the media and the press instead of trying to further choke off any limited space of press freedom found in the Internet.

"Why should Malaysia follow Singapore in regulating online portals when Singapore performed worse than Malaysia in press freedom?" asked Lim, who is also Penang chief minister and MP for Bagan,

According to Reporters Without Borders, Malaysia fell 23 places down from the year 2012 to 145th this year in the 2013 Press Freedom Index.

This was largely because "access to information is becoming more and more limited" due to the government's repeated efforts to censor information.

"Only Singapore performed worse than Malaysia, taking the 149th place. Is Malaysia going to compare itself with the better or the worse-off ones?" Lim asked.

He questioned whether the proposal was raised by Ahmad Shabery to pander to the Umno members, since the party elections would be held later this year.

NONEHe also slammed the minister's decision to publicly screen the controversial film Tanda Putera, which Lim said was not only divisive and discriminatory but also

promoted lies, hatred and fear.

“How can screening the racist hate film on May 13 riots, Tanda Putera, be compatible with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak’s call for national reconciliation and for the country to move forward with less politicking?”

Lim said it would be a grave mistake if Ahmad Shabery thinks that Umno can win back Malay or non-Malay votes by taking a hard line racist and extremist stand that raises fear and hatred to frighten the voters.

“Such tactics backfired badly in the recent general election, when more than 42 percent of the Malay voters, especially young voters, abandoned BN by voting for Pakatan Rakyat,” he claimed.

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