

Media freer than ever under Najib, says gov't
MalaysiaKini.com
Feb 13, 2014

Media in Malaysia is "freer than it has ever been" under the Najib Abdul Razak administration, the Prime Minister's Office says.

This is despite the country slipping two more notches to a record low in the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) 2014 World Press Freedom Index that was released yesterday.

"Online and in print, the media in Malaysia is freer than it has ever been. Malaysia enjoys an open and vibrant online media.

"Anyone who visits a Malaysian news website or political blog can see for themselves how free the online media is," the PM's Office said in a statement issued last night.

It added that under Najib, the requirement for annual renewal of print media licences has been relaxed, while cancellations or refusal to grant such licences is now open to judicial review.

Malaysia slipped two more notches to rank 147 in the latest Press Freedom Index. This is two slots below Myanmar, where reforms since 2011 have boosted its position to 145th spot.

However, RSF did not give specific reasons why Malaysia is ranked lower this year compared with last year.

Despite the relaxation of the publication permit regulations, media group Gerakan Media Marah (Geramm) said the government continued to rule over media with an "iron fist".

Most recently, the permit for the print version of news portal FZ.com was cancelled without a clear reason, even before the publication, FZ Daily, hit the newsstands.

This followed the suspension of news weekly The Heat's permit for several weeks.

Last weekend, national broadcaster RTM suspended sitcom '88 Kopitiam' pending a probe into complaints that a member of the sitcom cast had acted in a

controversial political satire produced by DAP's Seputeh MP Teresa Kok (left).

Yesterday, regulator Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission barred radio broadcaster BFM 89.9 from airing its interview with Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim.

However, the interview can be downloaded via podcast on the BFM 89.9 website.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/254237>