

DPM: Gov't not curtailing freedom of speech

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While the government clamps down on “racism, extremism, violence and crime”, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin assured that the government is not curtailing freedom of speech.

In discussing issues however, he said people should avoid questioning “sensitive issues” that are protected under the federal constitution, such as the special position of Malays, the monarchy, Islam, and the rights of non-Muslims and non-Malays.

“The government is stern in tackling problems that could raise racial problems - racism, extremism, and issues related to violence and crime - which have become a clear threat to us. We cannot ignore it, there must be stern action.

“That does not mean the government is stopping students or members of the public from discussing anything. There are no impediments, but there are certain limits so as not to impinge on sensitive issues,” he said.

Muhyiddin, who is also the education minister, said this in a speech to some 1,500 student representatives at Universiti Putra Malaysia today, emphasising the importance of racial integration and national unity.

He warned that if racial or religious conflict arises, it threatens peace in the country and puts the government’s development plans in jeopardy.

Muhyiddin’s comments come amid a spate of investigations under the Sedition Act, particularly against supporters and sympathisers of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim who accused the judiciary of bias in the Sodomy II trial.

Among those who have fallen into the dragnet include Penang exco member Afif Bahardin, DAP Perak chief Nga Kor Ming and activist Lawrence Jeyaraj.

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