

A lot more press freedom today, says Najib
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Prime Minister Najib Razak is seeing a lot more press freedom these days, and in fact, would like to see more of it.

"Freedom of the press has much more latitude today," he said at a question-and-answer session during the BN Youth Lab town hall meeting.

However, he was quick to issue a reminder that with great power comes great responsibility.

"You have to know that this is a multi-racial country. So don't cross boundaries which can easily snowball into full-fledged racial tension.

"We can give space but be responsible. Because now, there are still half-truths being published," he said.

"But I am in favour of more latitude for press freedom," he added.

His take on the topic comes amidst the backdrop of incidents where a radio DJ for a popular Chinese-language station was asked to go on leave for bringing up "sensitive topics", as well as the suspension of printing permits for newspapers belonging to Pakatan Rakyat component parties in July.

NONThe report unveiled at the town hall meeting in Kuala Lumpur this morning, revealed that slightly less than a quarter of 1,000 youths randomly polled wished for more freedom of speech for the country.

Direct membership into BN?

In the meantime, Najib (left) also hinted that direct membership into the BN coalition may still be on the cards.

"We will have a BN assembly at the end of this year. We will be discussing and making the announcement soon," he said when fielding a question on whether the BN would be opening its doors to those reluctant to join component parties.

To a related question, Najib - who is also the Umno president - said that the way forward is to have a general BN with the major race-based parties coming together under one umbrella.

But on doing away with race-based parties altogether, he said: "If the idea is good, we will look into it."

The BN is expected to hold a convention in November after the Umno general assembly to brainstorm changes and transformation to the coalition.

At the moment, those wishing to join the coalition would have to go through one of the 13 component parties.

However, some members and leaders have lamented the deterioration seen in several of

the major race-based parties, prompting Najib into proposing direct membership to an umbrella body.

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