

Kedah state reps debate media ban
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Opposition assemblypersons who spoke during the debate today on the royal address at the Kedah state assembly sitting raised the ban on coverage of the assembly proceedings imposed on several mainstream newspapers.

Saad Man (BN-Jitra) said the state government should review its directive to enable the people follow the discussions and decisions at the sitting.

"The discussions are for the good of the people. It is rather quiet during the sitting because many of the mainstream newspapers are not covering it," he said.

The PAS state government only allowed reporters from the national news agency Bernama and the The Star, Sinar Harian, Harakah, Sin Chew Daily, China Press, Kwong Hwa Jit Poh, Guan Ming Daily, Oriental Daily, Nan Yang Siang Pau, Makkal Osai and Malaysia Nanban newspapers to cover the sitting.

A letter containing the list of media organisations allowed to cover the sitting, signed by the press secretary to the menteri besar Muhamad Helmi Mohamed Khalid, was sent to the organisations last Thursday following alleged manipulation of news.

Mohd Tajudin Abdullah (BN-Belantik) said prohibiting coverage by the print and electronic media was not a normal practice.

"Under the BN administration in Kedah, media practitioners have never been prohibited from covering government functions, including assembly sittings," he said.

Ku Abdul Rahman Ku Ismail (BN-Guar Chempedak) said that though he sympathised with Menteri Besar Azizan Abdul Razak in the incident where Azizan scolded a reporter at a news conference, he did not think it was right to ban media from covering the state assembly sittings.

However, Mohd Nasir Mustafa (PAS-Kubang Rotan) said he agreed with the ban, saying that their news reports were wrong and that it was better to forgo coverage than cause uneasiness among the people.

- Bernama

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