

# PM: INTERNET RULES NEEDED TO KEEP ORDER

**Govt prioritising values over individual expression to ensure peace, says Anwar**

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**T**HE government is taking unpopular measures to curb the spread of misinformation and other negative activities on social media.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said new regulations had been introduced to tackle issues, such as fake news, fraud and cyberbullying, on social media.

“We are facing a proliferation of information. The government has the challenge of introducing some restrictions, which may not be popular.

“Those who advocate unbridled freedom believe we have every right to express our views regardless of their impact on society, ignoring the fact that some individuals, particularly girls, are (driven) to commit suicide due to harassment.

“The challenge is to impose order — not unbridled freedom or capitalism — but to prioritise values over individual expression for the peace and welfare of society.” He said this during his speech at the 7th World Conference on Islamic Thought and Civilisation.

The three-day event was officiated by Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah. Present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad.

On Sunday, Zahid said the federal government would ban social media and online messaging platforms that refused to comply with new licensing requirements.

These bans would be carried from Jan 1, after a new regulatory framework for social media and online messaging platforms takes effect from Aug 1.

Under the new framework, announced by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, platforms with at least eight million users in Malaysia must apply for a licence.

“Failure to obtain a licence after the effective date would be an offence, and legal action can be taken under the Communications and Multimedia Act,” it said.

MCMC added that the regulatory framework was in line with the cabinet’s decision requiring social media and online messaging platforms to comply with Malaysian laws and combat cybercrime.

This includes scams and online fraud, cyberbullying and sexual crimes against children.

Bernama reports that Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil held talks with Singaporean Digital Development and Information Minister Josephine Teo in Singapore yesterday.

The hour-long discussion at the Digital Development and Information Ministry (MDDI) focused on social media platform licensing to ensure a safe Internet environment.

Singapore has had a regulatory framework for social media platforms since 2022.

Fahmi, who is on a three-day working visit, heads a delegation that includes Deputy High Commissioner of Malaysia to Singapore Khairul Nazran Abdul Rahman and MCMC officials.

Before the meeting, Fahmi and his delegation met officials from MDDI and media regulator Infocomm Media Development Authority.

The delegation was briefed on Singapore’s Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act, Online Criminal Harms Act, and the handling of crises and emergencies, such as the spread of false information that threatened public safety or community health.

Fahmi is scheduled to meet social media company executives to discuss Malaysia’s concerns, including scams, cyberbullying and pornography.