

'FREEDOM OF MEDIA SECURE, BUT DON'T USE IT TO DIVIDE'

Govt won't impose controls on media's right to express opinions, criticism, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reiterated that the government is firm in its stance of guaranteeing media freedom, but that freedom cannot be used to undermine unity and harmony including by stirring up 3R

issues (race, religion and royalty).

He said the government always supported and defended the rights and freedom of the media in providing criticism, and this had been so since before independence.

"My stance and that of my colleagues in the cabinet is that no action will be taken or controls imposed on the freedom of journalists and the media to express opinions, feedback and criticism.

"I give an assurance that this spirit will remain, although this may lead to some anxiety due to our (government's) firmness in tackling issues related to security, chauvinistic beliefs, racism or religious fanatic movements.

"They don't just touch on issues



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says Malaysia can become a great nation if journalists focus on reporting with the aim of ensuring peace and highlighting the country's progress. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

of race and royalty, they use them to cause division and chaos," he said in his keynote address at the MPI-Petronas Malaysian Journalism Awards 2023 here on Friday.

The awards is an annual event to recognise outstanding journalism.

Anwar said Malaysia could become a great nation if journalists focused on reporting with the aim of ensuring peace and highlighting the country's progress.

"A successful journalist is one who works with feeling, confidence and passion for the profession.

"I believe Malaysia can become a great and strong nation if we focus on our goals of peace, economy, culture, religion and digital (advancement), but don't get dragged into issues that divide us, show ignorance or arrogance to the point of losing humanity."

He urged the people to improve

their command of English without marginalising efforts to make Bahasa Malaysia the lingua franca.

He said Bahasa Malaysia, the country's official language under the Constitution, must be upheld, but the importance of mastering English must not be neglected.

"I have instructed the education minister and Higher Education Ministry to uphold Bahasa Malaysia and at the same time improve the mastery of English."