

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Fahmi: Newspapers were shut, protesters jailed in Dr M's time

PUTRAJAYA: Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil has hit out at former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for claiming the government is curtailing freedom of speech.

"He can still speak up, no one is stopping him. He can attend any event and move freely.

"There is a big difference between now and then. In the past, newspapers were shut down and people who demonstrated were beaten and jailed.

"That was during Tun's time, not now," said Fahmi, who is the unity government's spokesman, during his weekly post-cabinet

meeting press conference.

He said Dr Mahathir should compare the current administration with his.

Dr Mahathir had claimed that although the country was free from colonial rule, it was now facing a form of "colonisation" by the government.

He claimed the people were not free to speak out and criticise the government, including on race, religion and royalty (3R) issues.

He claimed laws on 3R matters were invalid as they were enforced without approval from the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara.