

**PM urges foreign media to 'tell both sides of the story'**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**March 20 , 2012**  
**By Yow Hong Chieh**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 20 — The foreign media should strive to represent Malaysia as accurately as possible and not just sell the opposition's line, the prime minister said yesterday.

This was because foreign correspondents were "the eyes through which the world sees Malaysia, the ears through which it hears Malaysian voices", Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

Najib launching the Foreign Correspondents Club with club president Romen Bose (left) by signing on the FCC plaque in Kuala Lumpur on March 19, 2012. — Picture by Choo Choy May

The Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman said he was not naïve and understood editors preferred critical stories to positive ones but stressed that there were always "two sides to every story".

"If your editor called... and reassigned you to Washington DC, would you grill Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum about their policies or would you just assume they must be a better alternative than President Obama because he is in power and they are not?"

"If you were sent to Paris, would you ask François Hollande how he would tackle the eurozone debt crisis or would you just rally to his cause simply because President Sarkozy holds the keys to the Élysée Palace?" he said in his keynote address at the launch of the Foreign Correspondents Club here.

Najib added that he was committed to ensuring that the government would be more responsive to the needs of foreign media in order to foster a free and frank exchange of views.

He said that while correspondents here will not always get the interviews they wanted or comments from Putrajaya on breaking news, he would improve the way government worked with the media.

"I would ask each of you to return the favour. We're here, so please talk to us. And please don't just assume that the opposition angle is the only one to take," he urged.

Najib chided "complacent reporting" which passed judgment on decisions by Putrajaya which ran counter to Western values, pointing out that Malaysia was not the West.

He stressed, however, that this did not mean Malaysia was better or worse for following the Eastern model, noting that they were "just different".

"I am not afraid to say that what seems normal and obvious to Western eyes is not the same as what seems normal and obvious to Malaysians..."

"Malaysia is not a country where 'anything goes'. For us, some things are not okay," he said, adding that Asian nations should not pass judgment on what happened in the West either.

The prime minister nonetheless pledged that he would not stump for votes by attacking Western culture and values, as practised by politicians in less developed countries.

"I have always believed that instead of sniping at each other from opposite sides of the world, we would all do well to try and better understand what we can learn from one another," he said.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pm-urges-foreign-media-to-tell-both-sides-of-the-story/>