

No double standards between online and print media, says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said last night that there cannot be double standards when regulating the print and online media and the government would comprehensively review existing laws to take into consideration the development of online media.

“One of the initiatives under political transformation which I have announced is the move to abolish the renewal of the printing licence annually under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

“The government cannot be seen to have double standards with regard to its regulations on the print media and digital media,” he said.

Najib welcomed the effort of print media editors to form a Malaysian Press Council as a watchdog, to promote professionalism and to self-regulate.

He said although he wanted Malaysians to be well informed, he will leave it to the “special committee” for editors to come up with a workable code of ethics for the industry, according to Bernama Online.

The prime minister stated amendments to the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 will be tabled in the present session of Parliament along with laws to replace the Internal Security Act 1960.

He was speaking at the Malaysian Press Night and 2011 MPI-Petronas Malaysian Journalism Awards presentation here last night.

Najib (picture) claimed government measures might be the reason Malaysia’s World Press Freedom Index for 2011 ranking improved.

Malaysia moved up to 122 in 2011 in the index involving 178 countries.

However, Najib said despite Malaysia being the top ranked ASEAN country, he was not driven by external rankings. He added Malaysia had its own values and interest to protect.

The prime minister said his government was aware of the need for a free, fair and responsible media

A media according to Najib should mirror the soul, aspirations, pulse and concerns of the people by spreading information and promoting debate on issues.

But Najib said this has to be done in a fair and responsible manner, if not the media is doing a disservice to the country.

The editors of print media have agreed to draw up a code of ethics detailing journalistic

principles as guiding principles for journalists in carrying out their duties of news gathering and production, added Najib.

He said that the government will not interfere and allow the industry to self-regulate.

Also present at the event was Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim and MPI chief executive officer Datuk Chamil Wariya.

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