

**Practice Freedom Of Speech Within Malaysian Norms - PM
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 2 (Bernama) -- Freedom of speech must be suited and match Malaysian norms which are synonymous with good manners and noble values, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said this way, the freedom to express differences in opinions could be done wisely without inviting suspicions or prejudice.

"For democracy to truly function as it should, the people and media practitioners must uphold noble values so there are none among us who deviate (from these norms) or resort to abuse of power," he said in addressing the Malaysian Journalists Night 2013 here Wednesday.

He said demands for freedom of speech in the country not only arose due to globalisation but gained impetus because of access to the Internet, the people's higher socio-economic standing as well as education level.

He stressed that Malaysians wanted and could capitalise on freedom of speech by disseminating information that is accurate and did not lead to confusion.

"Freedom of speech must be suited and match Malaysian norms which are synonymous with good manners and noble values. Only then can we discuss important issues by way of dialogue when there is a difference in opinion among different groups," he said.

Najib said the landscape of the media and media organisations in the country had undergone rapid changes with the introduction of online media to complement the existing print and electronic media.

He added that anonymous writers in the social media had taken the opportunity to spread lies that could cause disunity and threaten the peace and harmony enjoyed by the people, compared with the mainstream media that continued to adhere to the ethics of journalism.

Najib therefore urged those using the social media as a tool to spread information, to remain steadfast to principles, responsibility and ethics.

"On this, I want to urge the people to propose the best form of monitoring and control to ensure what is written in the social media do not breach the laws.

"The proposals to be submitted should not contravene the Communications and Multimedia Act and also the Bill of Guarantee on MSC Malaysia (formerly the Multimedia Super Corridor) which stresses that there should be no censorship on the Internet," he said.

The Prime Minister also extended his appreciation to and praised journalists for carrying out their duties in an ethical and responsible manner during the 13th General Election (GE13), which concluded on May 5.

He said media freedom and freedom of speech truly became a reality and the wide use of all types of media was there for all to see during GE13.

However, he said the spread of all kinds of lies, slander and instigation in the social media that happened during GE13 should not be allowed to continue as it would only bring about a negative impact for the future of the nation.

Najib also urged journalists to wisely highlight issues like unity and Malaysia's efforts to become a highly successful nation.

"As journalists, you too have a role to play in dispensing information to the people. Let us shoulder the responsibility together to ensure Malaysia becomes a developed and high income nation that is both peaceful and prosperous while the people can reap the benefits," he said.

The Prime Minister also gave away prizes to the winners of MPI-Petronas Malaysia Journalism Awards 2012, including the prestigious Kajai award to Sophia Ahmad from Berita Harian.

Also present were Communication and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek and Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

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