

Putrajaya insists Malaysian media free, refutes press freedom index all-time low ranking
Malaysian Insider
Feb 12, 2014

Putrajaya has refuted Reporters Without Borders' 2014 World Press Freedom Index findings that press freedom in the country has deteriorated, saying "the media in Malaysia is freer than it has ever been".

"Online and in print, the media in Malaysia is freer than it has ever been," Putrajaya said in a statement today.

Malaysia's ranking in the 2014 Press Freedom Index dropped to an all-time low of 147 out of 180 countries.

Malaysia was ranked 145 in last year's index.

This year's index showed that Malaysia fared worse than South East Asian countries Brunei (117), Thailand (130), Indonesia (130), Cambodia (132) and Myanmar (145).

Despite this, the federal government insisted that Malaysia has not suppressed press freedom.

"Malaysia enjoys an open and vibrant online media. Anyone who visits a Malaysian news website or political blog can see for themselves how free the online media is."

The statement also said that laws on printing license have been relaxed under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"The requirement to renew print licences annually has been removed, and the Home Minister's authority to block, allow or revoke licences has been opened up to judicial review," it added.

Just yesterday, the Home Ministry revoked the publishing permit for FZ daily – hours after the publisher The Edge Communications Sdn Bhd was granted leave to initiate proceedings against the Home Ministry for deferring its initial approval of the permit.

The ministry had suspended news weekly The Heat last December for allegedly not informing it of changes in its ownership and refusal to respond to two show-cause letters.

However, the suspension order was lifted on January 27, more than a month after it was ordered to cease publishing.

Earlier, DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang called the decline in rankings a "shame" and "the worst setback" to Najib's claim that Malaysia had the "best democracy in the world".

"We were in a respectable ranking of 92 in 2006, but under Najib's premiership, Malaysia is now locked into the worst position in the bottom quarter of 180 countries assessed," Lim said. - February 12, 2014.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/putrajaya-insists-malaysian-media-free-refutes-press-freedom-index-all-time>