

**Putrajaya says media freer, but radio station barred from airing Anwar interview**  
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**Local business radio station, BFM has been barred from broadcasting an interview with PKR de facto leader, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on the Kajang by-election** – the same day Putrajaya said the media is freer than it has ever been.

This is not the first time that BFM has been barred from airing interviews.

It has also been called up for some of its programming by its regulator, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) which vets all programming.

It was understood the interview was to be aired today on the station's Evening Edition, which is a drive-time programme.

However, it was made available on the station's website with a notice saying it was barred from broadcast.

BFM is a radio station based in Bandar Utama, Selangor, and broadcasts in a spectrum that that also be received in parts of Negeri Sembilan and Malacca.

Malaysia strictly regulates the print and broadcasting media, but Putrajaya has taken great pains to say it has been liberal with the media and that "the media in Malaysia is freer than it has ever been."

Despite that, the Reporters Without Borders' 2014 World Press Freedom Index findings showed that press freedom in the country has deteriorated.

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 Malaysia fared worse than South East Asian countries Brunei (117), Thailand (130), Indonesia (130), Cambodia (132) and Myanmar (145).

But Putrajaya insisted it was freer, saying today "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.

"Moreover, under Prime Minister Najib Razak, print media licensing laws have been relaxed," the Prime Minister's Office said, adding a requirement to renew print licenses annually had been removed, and the Home Minister's authority to block, allow or revoke licenses had been opened up to judicial review.

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. – February 12, 2014.

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