

Malaysians have no self-discipline, so we regulate social media, says minister

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Putrajaya must create laws to curb the spread of lies on social media because Malaysians have no self-discipline when it comes to sharing false news, Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said.

The Barisan Nasional (BN) communications director said he was bemused by the fact that many Malaysians continued to spread stories that were clearly not true.

"That one I don't understand. I am trying to understand the psyche of Malaysians. Why is it that you know the story is so outlandish, so you know that it's not right, but still you want to forward it to your Whatsapp groups and whatnot.

"That's the nature of us. So if we cannot have self-discipline, then the government has to step in," he said at the pre-launch of the Malaysia Day Ride 2015 programme at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Rahman denied that introducing laws to regulate the Internet was political, saying that the spread of lies and slander threatened the nation's security, stability and the economy.

He said it was the government's responsibility to step in and protect Malaysia from being destroyed by lies on social media.

"We don't mind at all Malaysiakini, The Malaysian Insider, Free Malaysia Today and other blogs that reach the 'kampung'. We have no problem. We are not afraid of the spread of information.

"But we have to draw the line. This is not about Umno, this is not about politics. It is about the stability of the economy, the nation's security, the functioning of the country," he said.

He said it was dangerous for any government if classified information from Cabinet meetings or ongoing investigations were leaked to the public.

But he added that Putrajaya's commitment to spend "billions of ringgit" on rolling out broadband in rural areas was proof BN was not afraid of the Internet in general and its impact on their vote bank.

The new Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak recently said that news portals may have to be registered under proposed amendments to current cyber laws.

He told The Star in an interview that the proposed amendments may be tabled at the next Parliament sitting in October. – August 11, 2015

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