

MAHATHIR - PRESS
BM

82 (D)
KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT. 12 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD ASSURED TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE FREEDOM TO THE PRESS IN LINE WITH ITS LIBERAL STAND ON CONDITION THAT THE PRESS DOES NOT SMEAR THE GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE BELIEVED IN THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS BECAUSE THE MASS MEDIA WAS THE BEST CHANNEL TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE PEOPLE.

+HOWEVER, ALL JOURNALISTS SHOULD, IN WRITING THEIR REPORTS, GIVE IMPORTANCE TO WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY AND NOT WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE SALES OF THE NEWSPAPER AND THEIR POPULARITY,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THAT HE ALWAYS ADVISED HIS CABINET MINISTERS TO READ ALL THE CRITICISMS CONTAINED IN NEWSPAPERS DAILY AS PART OF EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE RUNNING OF THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY.

+I HAVE ALSO TOLD THE PRESS SEVERAL TIMES THAT THEY CAN CARRY OUT INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING REGARDING ANY DEVIATION BUT NOT SEX SCANDALS WHICH HAS BECOME A DAILY EVENT WITH CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE 1324/MK

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HE SAID THAT NOT ONLY WOULD THE READERS BECOME FED UP IF THEY WERE CONSTANTLY DELUGED WITH STORIES OF SEX SCANDALS BUT THE STORIES WOULD ALSO AFFECT THOSE SUPPOSEDLY INVOLVED WHO DID NOT DEFEND THEMSELVES.

HE SAID HE WAS DISTRESSED THAT THE NEWSPAPERS ACTED AS IF THEY WERE THE GUARDIANS OF MORALITY BUT IN FACT THEIR PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE THEIR PAPERS SELL WELL. -- BERNAMA 1325/MK