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MAHATHIR-PRESS
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KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 19 (BERNAMA) -- THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS EXISTING IN THE COUNTRY PROVES THE GOVERNMENT'S TOLERANCE TOWARDS THE NEWSPAPERS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMMAD SAID TODAY.

DENYING THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPPRESSION OF PRESS FREEDOM, HE SAID IF IT WAS TRUE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SUPPRESSED PRESS FREEDOM, THERE CERTAINLY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN REPORTS WHICH APPEARED TO HAVE INCURRED THE DISPLEASURE OF SEVERAL DELEGATES WHO SPOKE AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

+PRESS FREEDOM DOES EXIST IN THE COUNTRY AND THIS PROVES OUR TOLERANT ATTITUDE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID IN REPLY TO POINTS RAISED DURING THE ASSEMBLY WHICH ENDED HERE TODAY.

HE SAID HE HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF SUPPRESSING THE NEWSPAPERS AND THERE WERE ALLEGATIONS THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT ALLOW PRESS FREEDOM BUT ALL THESE CHARGES WERE UNTRUE.

+SOME OF THEM (THE NEWSPAPERS) ARE REALLY GOOD, ACTUALLY WANTING TO FILE REPORTS THAT WILL PLEASE US BUT SOMETIMES SOME OF THEM FILE REPORTS WHICH WE ARE NOT HAPPY ABOUT,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT IT WOULD BE BOUND TO HAPPEN IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE PRESS FREEDOM PROVED THAT THE PRESS WAS FREE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT IN TURN WAS FREE TO CRITICISE THEM.

HOWEVER, THE PUBLIC SHOULD NOT +CRITICISE WHOLESALAE+ AS THOUGH ALL OF THEM WERE NOT GOOD.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ACTUALLY MANY OF THEM FILE GOOD REPORTS AND GAVE A FAVOURABLE PICTURE FOR THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE.

+ALL THESE ARE REPORTED IN THE NEWSPAPERS AS A RECORD WHICH WE CAN REFLECT UNTIL OUR RIPE OLD AGE AND TO BE SHOWN TO OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN ON OUR INVOLVMENT AND INTEREST IN UMNO POLITICS,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE NEWSPAPER PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE AND WHILE NEWSPAPERS COULD BE CRITICISED, THE PEOPLE SHOULD NOT GO OVERBOARD IN CRITICISING THEM.

-- BERNAMA
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