

PM: Send reporters abroad to get impartial news

PETALING JAYA, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad suggested today that local newspapers station journalists in various countries to get "unorthodox" reports on international affairs.

He said the local media was dependent on Western news agencies and newspapers for foreign news coverage as a result of which "we get to read the views of people whose values and attitudes may not be the same as ours."

"Although we have got rid of physical colonisation after gaining independence, we are still colonised in our thinking because we read mostly reports written by Westerners," he said at the Malaysian Press Institute's awards presentation ceremony at a hotel here.

Citing reports on the political developments in Eastern Europe, he said the

news and features were based on the viewpoints of foreigners which were not necessarily the same as those of Malaysia.

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Dr Mahathir suggested that local newspapers pool resources and station journalists overseas who could write on issues in a logical and impartial manner.

He said he understood that newspaper companies might not be able to do this due to financial constraints and shortage of manpower.

"But if they want to send journalists overseas, they better not come to the Government for financial help... others might think the Government is trying to influence them," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that newspapers should not stress the question of the right to know because "sometimes it is better not to know about a certain inci-

dent than to know... we won't die just because we didn't get to read about it."

He advised newspapers to publish only constructive reports although he knew that publishing negative news would result in better sales.

"We always criticise traders for being overly concerned with making profits but by giving priority to negative reports, aren't newspapers being just as greedy, too?"

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat was also present.

The Best Reporter award in the English section went to Rose Ismail of *New Straits Times*, Johari Ismail and Mohamed Ibrahim of *Bernama*, won in the Bahasa Malaysia section and Teoh Yang Khoon of *Malayan Tong Bao* in the Chinese section and M. Malaiyandy of *Thinamani* in the Tamil section.

Each of them won \$3,000 and return tickets to Seoul.

They were no nominations for the *Kajai* award which carries a cash prize of \$5,000. There were also no nominations for the *Tokoh Wartawan Negara* award.

Saleh Osman of the *New Straits Times* won the first prize of \$2,000 in the Best Photographer category. Runner-up Loh Chok Heng, also from NST, received \$1,500 while Chong Teck Chan from *Shin Min Daily News*, who was third, received \$1,000.

The Best Sports Reporter award in the Bahasa Malaysia section went to Mohamed Rahime Yusoff from *Berita Harian*, Chew King from *Shin Min* in the Chinese section and V. Sugumar from *Tamil Osai* in the Tamil section. There were no nominations for the English section.