

R GE 27-02 00173 EG945

eng mes

Senate-Mahathir

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 27 (Bernama) -- The best way to be rid of defamation is to have society despise it, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He told the Dewan Negara the effectiveness of laws in wiping out defamation depended on how the act was gauged in the legal system.

+If acts of defamation are looked upon as mild and those making slanderous or libellous statements are not penalised appropriately, then such acts will become widespread,+ he said when replying to a question from Senator Dr Nordin Selat.

He said the government had a firm policy towards the spread of defamatory statements, by prosecuting printers, publishers, editors and news writers under the Printing Presses and Publications Act.

Asked by Senator Hassan Harun whether the government could amend the Act to ensure its effectiveness, the prime minister said changing the laws would be insufficient if society did not view the acts seriously enough. - more

♥27/02/17-36MST

R GE 27-02 00144 EG946

eng mes

Senate-Mahathir 2 Kuala Lumpur

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is the Minister of Home Affairs, said unlike a dadah-related crime for which the offence could be determined easily, an offence for a defamation-related crime was difficult to gauge.

Anyone who receives a letter containing libellous statements could prosecute the sender, he said.

Replying to a supplementary question, from Senator Hajah Salbiah Mohamed Akim, he said the receiver of letters containing libellous statements could file a defamation suit against the sender.

However, he said, it would not be easy to convince the court that the contents of the letters constituted defamation.

+Slanderous statements are made against the government and civil servants but we do not act against these, but leave it to society to gauge for itself,+ he said. -- more

♥27/02/17-38MST

R GE 27-02 00093 EG947

eng mes

Senate-Mahathir 3 Kuala Lumpur

Replying to a supplementary question from Senator Mustafa Awang, he said the Home Affairs Ministry did not have a record of the total number of books on sale which contain libellous statements.

He said slander or libel were despicable acts because they could destroy an individual, break up families and society, and destroy the nation.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said slander and libel were evil acts which came about because of adherence to bad values. -- Bernama

♥27/02/17-41MST