

Claims

born of malice

wrong, says PM

By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Government takes a very serious view of the spread of malicious accusations (*fitnah*) made against certain people for selfish purposes, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Negara.

Making and spreading wild and baseless allegations are activities that must be condemned by all Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir was responding to Senator Dr Nordin Selat in the Dewan Negara who had asked the Home Minister to state the Ministry's policy on books which contain malicious allegations which are available in the market.

Dr Mahathir said there are many ways for people to express their feelings without having to resort to *fitnah*.

Legal action

"The best way to stop this activity is to make *fitnah* unacceptable to society. The Government takes a tough stand on the spread of *fitnah*.

"If certain books are found to contain wild and malicious lies which can threaten public order and the security of the country or contravenes the Printing and Publishing Act 1984, legal action will be taken against the printers, publishers, editors and writers of those particular articles which are considered *fitnah*."

Dr Mahathir said if *fitnah* is taken lightly and not dealt with seriously by taking adequate legal action, it would spread beyond control.

In his reply, Dr Mahathir said the Quran considers the act of spreading malicious accusations as more dangerous than murder, emphasising that Islam takes a very serious view of this.

"*Fitnah* can destroy an individual, disunite families and society and also destroy the nation. It is an act of evil intentions," he said.