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Mahathir-Australia

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia cannot accept the kind of press freedom practised in Australia where the press are free to come up with all sorts of lies.

He said that he had conveyed this to Australian Foreign Minister Senator Gareth Evans who called on him while here to attend the Asean Foreign Minister-s Post Ministerial Meeting which ended on Tuesday. In Australia, press freedom stretches beyond normal freedom whereby the press was free to come up with all sorts of lies, he told reporters after tiring an Umno Supreme Council meeting here. In this respect, the Prime Minister also stated that the government of his country should not perpetuate such reasoning. Malaysia is of the opinion that press freedom did not mean the press is free to undermine others but to publish truthful reports, he said. --

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that the Malaysian government was aware of the existence of press freedom there and in the country.

However, he said that many foreigners had stated that press freedom did not exist in the country as they might have read newspapers like the New Straits Times, Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia and not publications like the Harakah, Watan and the Rocket.

+Freedom of the press is not good enough for us. The newspapers are free but newspapers lying deliberately . . . this is not freedom,+ he said. +Freedom means relating the truth,+ he added.

The Prime Minister had also stated to the Australian Foreign Minister that there also exist in England newspapers that were pro-government and those opposed to the government.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir however had not given the true picture of the relationship between the two countries. He had merely said: +Let us see what happens after this.+ -- Bernama

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