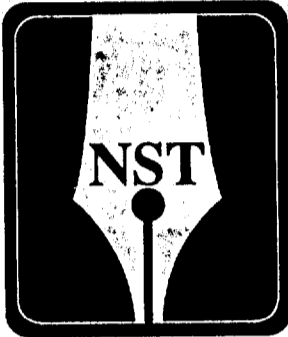


Anwar: PM concerned over reports

NST 22 JAN 1992

Pictures by Zahari Zakaria, Shukor Rahim, Tun Ishar Ishak and David Khoo

OPENING OF THE NEW
BALAI BERITA



KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is concerned over recent reports in the Chinese-language Press which incited racial sentiments regarding the shifting of a temple.

Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today that Dr Mahathir had asked him to express his concern.

He said this when opening the new \$64 million Balai Berita building in Jalan Riong here on behalf of the Prime Minister here.

Also present at the ceremony were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Datuk Bandar Tan Sri Elyas Omar, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Haniff Omar, several heads of Government departments and senior civil servants.

Datuk Seri Anwar said the Cabinet was also concerned over this trend and it had discussed the matter recently.

He said Malaysia had reached a level of maturity

where the people enjoyed freedom and a spirit of openness considerably more than before.

However, this did not mean that the Government should put aside all regulations.

"Is the Government oppressive if it strongly criticised newspapers which fanned narrow racial sentiments to prevent quarrels which may cost scores, if not hundreds, of lives?"

"I will choose — and the people have chosen — a Government that is firm towards the small and irresponsible minority which fan racial feelings to safeguard lives, property and the peaceful and stable po-

litical system and a growing economy.

"I will refer specifically to Chinese newspapers which have in recent months been abusing the meaning of freedom to incite racial feelings.

"(It involves) a small incident on a new project which required the shifting of a Chinese house of worship. This may be true or not true or that they (the temple involved) may want to appeal to the Government to reconsider.

"All that is acceptable. But turning it into a national issue — seemingly of a symbol of Malay administrators and a Government putting aside and destroying the culture and religion of the Chinese — will certainly create a new problem for us," he said.

Datuk Seri Anwar said it did not mean Chinese newspapers had adopted the same attitude all the time or that all Chinese newspapers had been behaving like this.

"I have to qualify by saying that there are some which have been responsible almost all the time, others some of the time while there are also irresponsible ones.

"I feel the views of the Cabinet should be noted."