

♥28/08/11-24MST

CNS3276

U GE 28-08 00211 EA196

aae tbe

Rptng, inserting +Kuala Lumpur+ in fourth para.

GOVT NEVER INTENDED TO CURB PRESS FREEDOM, SAYS MAHATHIR

Mahathir - OSA

bm

PULAU PINANG, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- The government has no intention to curb press freedom but is prepared instead to act against the misdeeds which the press exposes, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said however the government would take action under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) if there was evidence that the press had intimidated government officers to obtain classified information.

+The government has no intention to gag -the press because the truth will prevail,+ he told reporters after opening the Research and Development (R&D) Building of Syarikat Robert Bosch here.

He was asked to comment on calls for action to be taken under the OSA in the matter of alleged-irregularity in the purchase of Volvo cars by Kuala Lumpur City Hall which was published by the media.

Dr Mahathir said the government did not keep the expenditure of government departments a secret because the people had the right to know, and that every year the government announced its budget and expenditure. -- more

end of rptn

♥28/08/16-54MST

▼28/08/15-17MST

CNS3206

U GE 28-08 001.46 EA191

aae tbe

Mahathir - OSA 2 Pulau Pinang

+Every year, the government departments prepare their budget and list of expenditures, and the people have the right to know (the statistics),+ he said.

He said claims of irregularity in the office should be reported to officers or the minister.

+The government does not take misdeeds lightly but is disappointed when government secrets are intentionally exposed.

+The government can take action based on reports it receives but if the classified information is given to outsiders, it will be tantamount to violating the country's laws,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said however that this had happened and that the government would continue with its investigations to establish whether there was basis for the allegation and that the accusation would not impede action if it was true. -- more

▼28/08/15-38MST

CNS3219

U GE 28-08 00159 EA192

aae tbe

Mahathir - OSA 3 (last) Pulau Pinang

On the statement by Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas that sending troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina to resolve the problem there was not a matured decision; Dr Mahathir said Malaysia, as a member of the United Nations, would send its forces if the UN decided to send troops.

+There is nothing wrong with Malaysia sending its troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina if the UN made such a decision. It would be strange for Malaysia, as a UN member, not to send our troops,+ he said.

On a denial by DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang of Dr Mahathir's claim that the party had never expressed its position on the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue, Dr Mahathir said he retracted his statement now that he knew the actual position.

He said Lim had written to him about the statements the DAP had made on the issue. -- B e r n a m a

▼28/08/16-01MST