

CNS8189

U GE 13-09 00141 EG017

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Mahathir-newspapers

STOP SACRILEGE, PM WARNS NEWSPAPERS

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed has reminded newspapers not to carry items sacrilegious to the various religions in the country.

Doing so would only create public tension and strife which would not benefit anyone, he said.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a cartoon strip carried by a local Chinese newspaper last Monday purportedly depicting Prophet Muhammad.

"This is unhealthy ... we must not do things that touch on any religious beliefs in the country," he told reporters after opening the 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference at the Shangri-La here.

Dr Mahathir said there should be no sacrilege not only towards Muslims but also followers of other religions. -- more

AZZ RN

♥13/09/17-11MST

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Mahathir-newspapers 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

On the government's action against the newspaper concerned, Dr Mahathir who is Home Minister, said he would have to see the report on the matter first.

Kelantan Menteri Besar Haji Nik Aziz Nik Mat, who also attended the function, urged the authorities to take action against the newspaper.

He said being sacrilegious would not solve problems but only create contempt and vengeance.

"If something is wrong, we can sit together and discuss especially when it is about Prophet Muhammad ... we don't joke about it," he said of the cartoon strip. -- Bernama

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♥13/09/17-24MST

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U GE 13-09 00130 EG019

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Mahathir-newspapers 3 Kuala Lumpur (reopens item E812)

Meanwhile, the Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Ayob warned all newspapers that the ministry could revoke their permits if they ridiculed Islam.

He said newspapers should not touch on religious sensitivities especially that of Islam which is the country's official religion.

"Newspapers that deride Islam will have their permits cancelled," he said in a statement here.

The ministry would issue a stern warning to the publisher of the newspaper concerned and blacklist the person responsible in putting out the cartoon strip.

It would also investigate and fully monitor the Daily News of Hong Kong from which the cartoon strip was lifted, Megat Junid said. -- more

JO RN

▼13/09/17-53MST

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Megat Junid said to avoid a recurrence, the ministry would seek the help of Pusat Islam to scrutinise media publications for negative portrayals of Islam.

There was a need for an approach to counter such negative portrayals so as to protect Islam's sanctity and Prophet Muhammad's divinity, he said.-- Bernama

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