

CNS9115

U PE 11-12 00221 EB537

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Attn editors: urgent correction

In item slugged "Mahathir-Australia", para 3 line 2 should read "...the matter should now (rpt now) be regarded..." and not "not regarded" as sent.

Here corrected rptn

Mahathir-Australia

NO ACTION AGAINST AUSTRALIA, SAYS PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11 (Bernama) -- The government will not take any action against Australia after taking note of the reactions and sentiments of the peoples of the two countries and Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating's recent statement of regret, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the government felt that the matter had brought about greater Australian awareness of the sensitivities of Malaysians which should help similar incidents in future.

"The government does not wish to prolong this issue and will take no further action. The matter should now be regarded as closed," the prime minister said in a press statement released by his office, here.

The statement was distributed by his press secretary, Zakaria Wahab, to reporters covering the Umno supreme council meeting at the Umno headquarters, here.

Dr Mahathir said the cabinet had considered the reactions of Australians in general to their prime minister's remarks which had adversely affected the relationship between the two countries. -- more

HK JK

11/12/17-20MST

CNS9108

U PE 11-12 00143 EB535

aae

Mahathir-Australia 2 Kuala Lumpur

Keating had called Dr Mahathir recalcitrant for not attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Seattle last month.

Dr Mahathir said the cabinet also noted that Malaysians by and large felt slighted over the remarks made by Keating.

However, having taken into consideration the reactions and sentiments of the Australians and Malaysians, and the regret expressed by Keating, the cabinet decided that no action would be taken against Australia, he added.

Dr Mahathir chaired the meeting which started at about 9.15am at the Prime Minister's Department after he returned from briefing the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah at Istana Negara on its agenda.

The meeting, which ended at about noon, was also attended by newly-appointed minister Haji Abdul Ghani Othman. -- more

HK JK

11/12/17-10MST

CNS9117

U PE 11-12 00149 EB538

aae

Mahathir-Australia 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Following is Dr Mahathir's statement in full:

"The Cabinet today took note of the reactions of Australians in general to the remarks of their prime minister which had affected adversely the relationship between both countries. The Cabinet also noted that Malaysians by and large feel slighted over the remarks made by Mr Paul Keating.

Having taken into consideration the reactions and sentiments of both Australians and Malaysians, and the regret expressed by the Australian Prime Minister, the Government is of the view that the matter has brought about greater Australian appreciation of the sensitivities of Malaysians which should help prevent similar incidents in future.

The government does not wish to prolong this issue and will take no further action. The matter should now be regarded as closed. -- Bernama

HK JK

11/12/17-25MST