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Dr M: Rumour mongers worse than cowards

LANGKAWI, Sun. - Describing those who spread rumours of racial strife as worse than cowards, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Malaysians were not the type to fight among themselves.

The Prime Minister said people should ignore such talk as the nation was capable of dealing with any eventuality.

"We have enough personnel to safeguard the security of the people and nation.

"Moreover, Malaysians will not be easily influenced to fight among themselves or cause riots.

"Only these enemies of the nation want to cause unrest," he told reporters after visiting the Langkawi International Shooting Range which would be hosting the Commonwealth Games shooting event.

Asked to comment on last Friday's rumours that immigrants had taken up arms against the authorities, reportedly in the Chow Kit area in the Federal capital, Dr Mahathir reiterated that there was no such thing.

He said there were people who were just out to create problems in the country.

For example, he said such people had recently caused hatred among Muslims and Hindus.

He said in that incident, he believed that the same culprit wrote both to the Muslims and Hindus to gather for a fight.

"This is an evil intention and the people should not fall prey to rumours like this," he added.

In reply to a question on how to stop such rumour mongers once and for all, he replied that not much could be done to prevent such evil intentions.

"We look for them, they hide ... they are bacul (worse than cowards) ... if they are brave they should come out and talk about it openly," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the people should refer these rumours to the police to verify their authenticity.

In this context, he said, the Press had a role to play in quashing such rumours.

In Pulau Indah, Selangor, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik described those who spread rumours as evil and irresponsible.

He said people should not spread rumours that would disrupt security, stability and harmony.

"Malaysians who come across such rumours should also not fall prey to them," he said.

He urged the Chinese community not to listen to these rumours.

In Klang, Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said: "These rumours through the Internet and e-mail are not true."

"I hope the people will not fall victim to such rumours and start panic buying of goods," he said after opening the St John Ambulance Malaysia, (Selangor Coastal Area) 20th Area Review at Stadium Kota Raja today.

In Seremban, Information Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal urged the people to exercise discretion and judge for themselves the truth of information circulated on the Internet.

"As Internet users, they must be capable of differentiating the truth from the lies as the authorities cannot screen everything that is available on the Internet," he said after opening the Sekolah Menengah

Agama Datuk Kelana annual general meeting today.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports that the National Unity and Social Development Ministry is making efforts to educate the public about the dangers posed by rumours, including those spread through the Internet.

The minister, Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail, said people must know "how to detect and kill rumours" by explaining the true situation to their families and friends.

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