

03 JUL 1998

Mahathir-Press

M'SIAN PRESS MORE INTERESTED IN HITTING OUT AT GOVT, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, July 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Malaysian press is more interested in criticising the government than helping it overcome problems.

"Whenever we say something, it will always be reported by them in a negative way," he said.

"I'm very sad because our newspapers should be helping us overcome problems. Instead, they are more interested in boosting their sales and as such they report negatively on everything."

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the presentation of excellent service awards ceremony for staff of the Prime Minister's Department at Pusat Islam here.

Referring to the local media coverage of the teething problems at the KL International Airport (KLIA) which opened on Tuesday, Dr Mahathir said the press was having a field day playing up the problems.

"(Admittedly) there are problems at the KLIA in Sepang but only these are being highlighted by our press. In America there was an airport which could not function at all when it opened ... all the luggage went missing.

"When it happens in Malaysia, look at how sensational the reporting is."

Dr Mahathir said the press did not report on successful projects and were not helping in the nation's economic recovery.

"When we set up funds to help businessmen, they ask whether it is intended to help so and so. Certain people would be mentioned.

"So we allocate several billion ringgit just to help this person or other ... this is their thinking and it is not helping to overcome the country's problems," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was thankful that government officers and staff did not cause problems to the nation but instead were striving to improve the country's administration.

At a press conference in Kedah yesterday, Dr Mahathir also criticised the local media for being more interested in politics than in the nation's economic revival.

As usual, the Prime Minister met reporters after today's function but the press conference was rather brief as the newsmen were apparently still digesting the premier's latest criticism.

-- BERNAMA

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