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Mahathir - press

GOVERNMENT WON'T COUNTER BRITISH PRESS ALLEGATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, May 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said it is not worthwhile for the government to counter adverse reporting by British newspapers against Malaysia.

Given that it is the press barons who controlled the British media," anything we do will be reported in an adverse way to make matters worse," he said.

The prime minister was approached by reporters on the matter after he launched Asnita, Malaysia's first unit trust fund for women here today.

Dr Mahathir was asked why the government has not countered British press reports particularly allegations of mass-poisoning and killing of Indonesian illegal immigrants and those undermining Malaysia's ability in hosting the Commonwealth Games in September.

The Observer and the Independent newspapers, in particular, have reported that Indonesian illegal immigrants in Malaysian detention camps were poisoned and killed pending deportation.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were all aware of the ill will of the foreign media towards the country, sparing no efforts to frustrate Malaysia in anyway they could.

"This is part of freedom of the press ... the freedom to influence adversely against other countries, freedom to tell lies , this is part of the freedom of the press as interpreted by them," he said.

But as for Malaysia, freedom of the press meant responsibility and one could not have freedom without responsibility, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian press should not emulate the western media which he said made money out of other people's miseries.

-- BERNAMA

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