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Mahathir-Press

LOCAL MEDIA TOLD NOT TO IMITATE REPORTING STYLE OF THE WESTERN PRESS

BANGI, July 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the local media need not imitate the reporting style of the Western press.

He said that the Western media coverage was more inclined towards attracting readers without any consideration to implications on society.

"In the West, there are news reports written without any consideration to morality and implications on society but only to make the writers well known and the newspapers popular.

"Many newspapers in the West sensationalise stories with elements of sex and violence," he said when opening "Sri Utusan", the new ultra-modern printing complex of Utusan Melayu (Malaysia) Berhad here.

Dr Mahathir said that unfortunately the local media seemed to be influenced by them.

The Prime Minister said there was no doubt that the press had a very strong influence on society.

However, he said, some newspapers abused this for certain reasons to the extent that their role was defeated and the society ended up in chaos.

"Actually, we need not imitate others because they (the West) are developed and chaos will not destroy their nation," he said.

"Instead, as a developing country, Malaysia needs everyone's efforts to ensure progress in the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the press in the country could use their power and influence to benefit the country.

He said that the inclination to write reports which were unfounded would only tarnish the image of the country.

"We don't want the country to be covering up events that really happened but coverage should also be balanced with news reports that can project the image of the country," he said.

He said that the local media tend to write negative reports on the country but seemed disinterested to do so with regards to other countries where there were even worse happenings.

"In actual fact, what happened in other countries were often worse than in ours. But since we were the ones to undermine our own country we are easily deceived by reports that we read and we feel that we are not so good, we are at fault and so on," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was also a developed country which was pursuing greater progress.

He said that if the society was divided and there were problems in the country, development efforts would be retarded.

Dr Mahathir said that in future, training to cadet reporters should focus on their responsibility to society besides making a name for themselves.

He said that an approach adopted based on the Western style of exposing certain things would certainly sell the papers but would not benefit the country.

Focusing on such things would not help develop the nation, he said.

Dr Mahathir, escorted by the Utusan Group executive chairman, Tan Sri Kamarul Ariffin, later toured the RM110 million complex covering 18,832 sqm.

It is equipped with the latest technology and is capable of printing 70,000 copies per hour.

The opening of the complex is in conjunction with the company's 60th

anniversary celebrations.

Asked by reporters later on the tendency of the media to publish negative reports, Dr Mahathir said that from his observation the local press often seek unfavourable news to report.

"That is my observation. I may be wrong in my observation but I found that we are always seeking for something unfavourable in the country to report and as such Malaysians feel inferior while others are better whereas sometimes others are even worse but we do not report them," he said.

Dr Mahathir however said that not all of them were inclined that way but it was more obvious now compared to previously.

"It seems now when we say something positive about the government, we are committing a crime. So to be credible, you must constantly condemn the government, condemn the establishment and the country also," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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