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Mahathir-Media

MEDIA DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 29 (Bernama) -- The media does not fully understand its role and responsibilities, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

As a result, he said, the media as a powerful instrument had created a lot of problems to a lot of people.

Speaking at the Virtual Commonwealth Dialogue Session here, Dr Mahathir said freedom of press must come along with responsibilities.

"They must use freedom to provide the truth, that means both sides of the picture," he said at the video conferencing with local and international panelists.

The Prime Minister said people in this era of information technology were supposed to be the well informed.

"But the fact is that we are not very well informed because very often the information we get is very inaccurate," he said.

Citing an example, he said, there was a report that some 150,000 people would gather at the Merdeka Square here to demonstrate.

"But 150,000 would have choked up. There were only about 5,000 people which admittedly is big enough for our country. But the information is not accurate," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said a Malaysian Member of Parliament visiting Moscow told him how inaccurate some media reports were about this country.

He said the MP told him that the CNN had reported that there would be a terrible street demonstration in Moscow against President Boris Yeltsin.

"But actually there was a celebration of 800 years of the founding of Moscow. Only some 10 people with 10 placards against Yeltsin. He (the MP) was there. He knows it was not true," said Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister said the media was important as it was powerful in various matters such as influencing the people's thinking and investments.

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