

NEWSPAPER DIGEST
08 APRIL 1998

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement Tuesday that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has not shown any progress in efforts to regulate currency trading was made top front page headline story in SUN, TAMIL NESAN, MALAYSIA NANBAN and UTUSAN MALAYSIA.

The news item which also appeared as a front page report in NEWS STRAITS TIMES, BUSINESS TIMES, BERITA HARIAN, NANYANG SIANG PAU and SIN CHEW JIT POH quoted the prime minister as saying although the IMF had promised to study Malaysia's proposal on the matter, it had yet to make any suggestion.

"I don't know why...so long as the currency fluctuates, they (currency traders) will make profits," he told reporters after holding Aidiladha open house at Dewan Jitra, Jitra, newspaper reports said.

He was asked to comment on the latest development in Malaysia's proposal to regulate currency trading following the financial crisis in the region since last July.

Sarawak newspapers -- SARAWAK TRIBUNE, BORENO POST and UTUSAN SARAWAK in their front page headline news item quoted Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud as saying he doubted the sincerity of Swiss environmentalist Bruno Manser's purported apology for staying illegally in Sarawak in the 80s.

The news item also given a wider coverage by newspapers in Sabah as well as the Peninsula.

Manser's credibility was questionable, he told reporters after distributing sacrificial beef to poor muslims in Kuching and Samarahan divisions in conjunction with Hari Raya Haji Tuesday. said.

Manser, who now runs Bruno Manser Fonds, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) for the protection of indigenous people worldwide based in Basel, Switzerland, said he had written to Taib on March 31 of his intention to return to Sarawak.

Copies of Manser's letter, which were also faxed to local newspapers in Kuching, stated that he was scheduled to arrive Kuching from Zurich Tuesday for the Hari Raya Haji celebrations.

Taib, however, did not confirm receiving the letter, saying "it remains a speculation".

Manser was blacklisted by the Sarawak government for instigating the Penans against logging activities on their native land.

Water shortage continue to be a front page report of several dailies.

The subject matter appeared as top story in BERITA HARIAN, NEWS STRAITS TIMES and THE STAR.

According to NEW STRAITS TIMES angry consumers, frustrated by the Selangor water works department's silence and slow responses, want it to be revamped and its senior officials held responsible for the poor handling of problem.

Consumer representatives, MPs and residents' associations, who bore the brunt of the people's anger, said the mood was one of extreme frustration.

"Pushed to the edge, some have called for the removal of those in top posts", declares NST.

Meanwhile, top story in THE STAR says an average Malaysian household wastes 1,165 litres of water daily although the international standard for consumption is only 165 litres per head.

Quoting the Malaysian Water Association and Institute of Engineers Malaysia (IEM) the daily said such wastage coupled with overconsumption by industrial consumers, had taken a toll on existing water resources and

supply.

In another related development BERITA HARIAN, in its front page headline, said the Ministry of Public Works is formulating a long-term plan to ensure enough water supply for the whole country.

Quoting the Minister, Datuk Seri S. Samy Velly the Malay daily said new infrastructures to be built includes dams, water treatment plants and pipe network that could last up to 100 years.

Several dailies reported that the cabinet will decide at its weekly meeting today (Wednesday) on the official Made-In-Malaysia logo to make it a compulsory label on all locally made products for domestic and export markets.

This news item appeared as a front page report in TAMIL NESAN.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob was quoted as saying that the selected logo was expected to come into official use in three months' time.

According to newspaper reports Aidiladha was celebrated on a moderate scale nationwide Tuesday by Muslims who started off the day with prayers at the mosques.

This was followed by the slaughtering of sacrificial livestock.

News on Aidiladha appeared as a front page report in BERITA HARIAN with other dailies giving it a wider coverage.

At Masjid Negara in Kuala Lumpur, thousands of city folk attended the prayers which were telecast live by RTM while the nation's latest private television station, NTV7, which starts its service Tuesday, telecast the prayers at Masjid Zahir in Alor Setar.

The normally-busy streets of Kuala Lumpur were quiet, with many of the city folk having returned to their hometowns to celebrate the occasion with their relatives and to take advantage of the public holiday.

Meanwhile, in a front page report BERITA HARIAN said no untoward incidents happened and everything went on smoothly as millions of Muslims from all over the world performed their rites and rituals in Mina at the peak of the Haj pilgrimage Tuesday.

The daily quoted a Saudi Arabian official as saying this.

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