

21/04/1999

Call for ban on new political novel

PENANG, Tues. - A recently published book written in Bahasa Malaysia by a national literary laureate on current politics, has raised a storm of protest.

Several Umno divisions here have called for the book to be banned and action taken against the author on the grounds that the swear words in the book were "defamatory and totally unbecoming of a national literary laureate".

The book, a "political novel" which the author says is a satire of political happenings in the country, is reported to have been quickly snapped up. All 15,000 copies of its first publication circulated in Kelantan, Kedah and Penang, were said to have been sold out.

It is learnt that a reprint of the book, priced at RM15 and published by Pustaka Reka in Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, and printed by PAP Sdn Bhd in Kota Baru, is under way.

Despite the normal disclaimer that it is a fictional novel which does not have any relation to any real person, living or dead, the contents of the book appear to be a veiled attack on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his associates in the Government.

According to the author the aim of the book was "to expose the wrong done by certain politicians and political organisations in the country, to right the wrong and to make the wrongdoer seek forgiveness".

Meanwhile, the Umno Bayan Baru and Bukit Mertajam divisions called for the author to be stripped of his Tokoh Sasterawan Negara (national literary laureate) and Ma'al Hijrah awards.

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