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Police investigating slander against Dr M, other leaders

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Police are investigating the sources of slanderous statements made against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other government leaders.

Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai today said police were monitoring all slanderous statements, including news reports, which amounted to incitement.

Norian, however, declined to say whether police had identified the individuals or groups responsible for such acts.

"We are studying the statements disseminated, and we take note of the PM's observation," Norian told Bernama here.

Dr Mahathir said last night the slandering of government leaders was a security problem which could not be taken lightly.

Norian, who is discharging the duties of the IGP, said police viewed the matter seriously.

Police investigations need not necessarily be based on reports received, especially if it concerned national security.

Dr Mahathir, speaking after an Umno Supreme Council meeting, said the slanderers had become so bold as to urge Muslims to assassinate government leaders.

He said the statements were tape-recorded and distributed throughout the country.

In Klang, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the circulation of audio tapes containing speeches by unnamed persons urging Muslims to resort to violence was the work of groups out to create mischief.

He said only such people would resort to such dirty and under-handed tactics.

Saying the matter could not be taken lightly, Dr Ling said there was always the small percentage who would believe the lies and slander.

"The majority of Malaysians are level-headed and can dismiss this as madness but we must be careful with those who may choose unorthodox solutions," he said after launching the Star Cruises simulation centre.

In Kuala Terengganu, Deputy Science, technology and Environment Minister Datuk Abu Bakar Daud said the Government had set up a body to counter the wrong information, slander and allegations spread through the Internet against the country's leaders and the Government.

It was supported by non-governmental organisations and would, through the Internet, give a true picture of the situation.

"The people will be given the facts in various issues raised in the Internet which are wrong and ill-intended, whether in economy, politics, education, social and international relations," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after launching the Kumpulan Ekonomi Nelayan at Kampung Pantai Batu Buruk today. Also present was Fisheries Department director Abdul Rahman Mohamad.

In Kota Baru, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Senator Datuk Ibrahim Ali challenged people who made wild accusations and threats against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to come out in the open.

He said if they were responsible people they should be bold enough to come forward and file their case in the courts.

He said hiding their identity in tape recordings would only show that

they were cowards.

"If they are responsible and truly want to prove their accusations, come forward so that legal proceedings can be taken," he told reporters during his visit to the Kota Baru court house today.

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