

Media reports provoke people's anger, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed disappointment today over certain media reports which, he said, provoked the people's anger.

He was referring to reports on the recently-announced increase in the price of petrol and the North-South Highway toll charges.

The 10 sen increase in the price of petrol was

announced in his budget speech on Oct 19, and the 10% toll increase by Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu on Wednesday.

Mahathir also chided the media for their reports which "blame the accused in certain cases, as if they are already criminals".

"It is not fair to the accused," he said after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters here.

Asked if the council discussed the Hardcore Poor Development Programme cheating probe, he said: "Our stand is that a person is innocent until he is proven guilty. It is our law. If we, from the very beginning, say that the person is guilty, this would be framing him."

He also corrected a news report today which said a senator had demanded a three-fold increase in the

allowance for senators.

The report in an English-language daily said Senators Club president Datuk Dr T. Marimuthu, while debating the budget, had asked that their allowance be raised from RM100,000 to RM300,000 for their three-year term.

"He did not ask an allowance for himself. He was asking for allocations to be spent on the rakyat under his charge," Mahathir said.