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Base more Japanese journalists in Asia 'to report truth'

OSAKA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called for more Japanese journalists to be based in Asian countries so that the truth about what is happening can be reported.

He said that reports by Western journalists were not accurate and reflected the agenda of the Western press.

The Prime Minister said this in response to a proposal by a panellist at a forum that 30 newspaper and TV representatives from Asia be stationed in Japan to relay news direct to their countries.

He said it should be the other way round as it was costly for the Asian countries to have their journalists in Japan.

"More Japanese journalists should be stationed in Asia to collect the real truth of what is happening," he said when speaking at a reception to mark the publication of his book *Reflections On Asia*.

His book, based on his articles in the daily *Mainichi Shimbun* and launched in Japan last month, is a compilation of his commentaries and opinions from February 1999 to June last year.

"I hope the book sells well, not so much because of the money I'm going to earn but I think it is necessary that viewpoints of Asian leaders be heard and read in order to compare with the reports that you read in the press, particularly Western press," he said.

"If you read reports in Western press, I don't think you would even go to Malaysia, much less invest in Malaysia because they give such a bad picture of our country," he added.