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Mahathir-Nanyang

GREEN LIGHT TO BUY NANYANG NOT A DIRECTIVE, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he did not issue any directive to the MCA to buy over Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd.

"They (MCA) asked me whether they can buy, I say you can buy. A directive is when I call the MCA and (say) now you buy... that is a directive," he told a press conference at the end of the second day of the 55th Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said this when asked to comment on his statement yesterday that he had given the green light to the party to buy Nanyang Press Holdings, which publishes the Nanyang Siang Pau and China Press newspapers.

The Prime Minister said that besides MCA, other groups such as the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ACCIM) had also sought his advice on buying the dailies.

He reiterated that there was no law to prevent the MCA or anyone else from buying or owning a newspaper.

"Is it that only the Opposition can buy a newspaper? If the MCA ask me can we buy a newspaper, my answer is yes...If Gerakan ask me, yes by all means do... anybody. If PPP ask me, my answer is yes," he said.

The DAP had its own newspaper but no one complained about it, Dr Mahathir said referring to the opposition party's organ "The Rocket".

He said PAS's newspaper Harakah was being sold all over the country.

"So I don't see why I should tell MCA no you musn't buy. How do I know the Chinese community will object to a political party buying a Chinese newspaper when the Malay community does not object a Malay party owning a newspaper.

"I mean we can't treat the Chinese differently from the Malays," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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