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Mahathir-Media

MAHATHIR WANTS JAPANESE MEDIA TO SEND MORE JOURNALISTS TO ASEAN NATIONS

By: D.Arul Rajoo

OSAKA, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- Japanese media organisations should assign more journalists to the Southeast Asian countries to get accurate news from the region, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said such practice would allow the Japanese media to report the actual and true happenings there.

"Japan is close to Asean but unfortunately Japanese journalists do not make direct reports about the situation in Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries," he said at a reception to commemorate the publication of his book, "Reflections of Asia", here.

The book is a collection of monthly articles written by him for the Mainichi Daily News between February, 1999, and June 2000. The interviews were done by the newspaper's Hong Kong Bureau Chief, Akiko Kato.

Dr Mahathir, who is here for a four-day working visit, said the Japanese media were too dependent on the western media like the wire agencies whose reports were often not accurate and reflected certain agenda they had on Asean nations.

He said the idea of putting more Japanese journalists in the Asean countries would be feasible compared with suggestions that 30 journalists from the region to be stationed here.

"Japan is an expensive place. Instead of us coming to Osaka, you can send your journalists there," he said, referring to a proposal by former director-general of the Economic Planning Agency Taichi Sakaiya for the placement of journalists from Southeast Asian countries in Osaka.

Taichi made the proposal during a panel discussion at the Mainichi International Symposium as a way to promote the Kansai region.

Dr Mahathir said his articles in the newspaper had enabled him to focus on issues related to Malaysia, Japan and Asean as well to put forward Malaysia's views on various subjects that were normally not heard of in Japan or anywhere in the world.

"I hope this book sells well here, not so much for the money I am going to earn but for the viewpoints of Asian leaders to be heard. If you read only western reports, I don't think you will go to or invest in Malaysia," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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