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Mahathir-Sun

NO PRESSURE ON SUN EDITORS TO RESIGN, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he did not exert pressure on the owner of The Sun newspaper to take action against the employees of the daily over a front page report about a plot to assassinate him and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"Ask them to come and tell me that I'm exerting pressure and I will tell them in the face what I think about them," he said at a news conference after attending the People's Progressive Party (PPP)'s open house, here.

He was responding to a question from a reporter from The Sun, who said that the newspaper had received letters from readers who felt that the prime minister and the government were exerting pressure on the owner of the newspaper to act against its employees over the report.

Last Friday, Dr Mahatir said that he was satisfied with the action of a few top-level media practitioners of the Sun newspaper who resigned after publishing a front-page story on Dec 25 about a plot to kill him and Abdullah.

The following day, Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said he never instructed the editor-in-chief and editor of the Sun to resign their posts for the publication of the story.

Following the denial by the police and the two leaders that there was such a plot, the editor-in-chief of the daily, H'ng Hung Wong and editor Andy Ng, tendered their resignation while chief news editor Robert Ho was suspended.

Reporter R.Manirajan, who wrote the story and photographer Anita Mohamed Nasir were also suspended indefinitely.

Meanwhile, about 3,000 people attended the PPP open house to mark the four major festive celebrations in Malaysia -- Aidil Fitri, Christmas, Deepavali and the upcoming Chinese New Year.

Prime Minister's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, was also present.

The open house was graced with performances by underprivileged children from charitable homes and organisations such as Rumah Ozanam and Pure Life Society,

Dr Mahathir also presented gifts to the Malaysian paralympics athletes who had won medals in various international competitions.

-- BERNAMA

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