

28 APR 2003

Abdullah-Economist

ABDULLAH PLEDGES "MOST EFFECTIVE ACTION" AGAINST "THE ECONOMIST"

BUTTERWORTH, April 28 (Bernama) -- The Government will take "the most effective action" against The Economist of London for publishing an article which humiliated Malaysia and its leadership, acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Government had discussed the form of action that would be taken against the magazine and this action would serve to remind them and other like-minded writers that it would not pay to come up with such base articles, he said.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said this when asked about the form of action that would be taken against The Economist and whether it would be allowed to circulate in this country.

"We want whatever action that is taken to be most effective," he said after a meeting with community leaders and local officials here.

The magazine was said to have questioned the integrity of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and levelled unfair criticism at his leadership.

Asked whether the The Economist had offered any clarification or apology, Abdullah said he had not received any such thing from the magazine.

Head of Puteri Umno Malaysia, Azalina Othman Said, urged the Home Ministry not to allow the magazine to be circulated in Malaysia.

Malaysian Youth Council Vice President Ahmad Sobri urged the government to be very firm with such writers.

Secretary-General of Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia Datuk Dr Maamor Osman said banning the magazine in this country would be the best way to teach them a lesson.

In PENDANG, Kedah, the April 5 issue of The Economist was burnt in front of the Umno office, witnessed by a large group of politicians and university students.

Apart from Umno Youth and Puteri Umno members, some 80 students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) were also present.

President of the UTM Student Representative Council Mohd Shahar Abdullah said the university students felt the article had no credibility and was very stupid.

"The Economist should be banned in this country," he added.

-- BERNAMA

FIZ MAN AAM