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Syed Hamid-Economist

MINISTER IN FAVOUR OF CURBING CIRCULATION OF IRRESPONSIBLE PUBLICATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 27 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today that he did not see why international publications that belittle the country and its leaders should continue to circulate locally.

He said the government had no objection if the articles contained constructive criticisms but would not tolerate those that attacked the credibility of the country's leadership and looked down on Malaysia's capabilities.

Referring to a stinging article on Malaysia and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the April 5 issue of The Economist magazine, Syed Hamid said: "I think we have to take serious action (on the matter).

"Why we should encourage the sale of such magazines in our country?"

Speaking to reporters after opening the Kepong Umno Division meeting here, he said the authorities should be more careful in vetting publications before allowing them to be circulated here although nothing much could be done in terms of their international circulation.

Noting that the government had no intention to curb press freedom, he said freedom nonetheless did not mean a free ticket to fulfil any whims and fancies.

"What I think we want is that they must be fair; there must be balanced reporting," he said.

Earlier, in his speech, Syed Hamid called on Umno members to truly work for the sake of the party and the community instead of expecting "goodies" to come their way.

-- BERNAMA

MAM KHY YBY