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Mahathir-AWSJ

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TICKS OFF AWSJ OVER INCORRECT ILLUSTRATION

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- The office of the Prime Minister said today that it is appalled by the "callous disregard for accuracy" on the part of the Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ) which carried an incorrect illustration of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in its edition yesterday.

This was contained in a letter signed by Dr Mahathir's principal private secretary Datuk Badariah Arshad and addressed to AWSJ editor Reginald Chua in Hong Kong.

The AWSJ carried a correction today over the illustration which accompanied its article on the upholding of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's conviction and prison sentence for sodomy.

"This office acknowledges AWSJ's clarification. However, we feel it necessary to put on record our dissatisfaction," Badariah said.

She said such an error should not have come from AWSJ which prided itself as a leading regional publication in Asia.

Badariah said such flippant attention to detail was unbecoming, more so since this is not the first time that such a glaring error concerning Malaysia has been made.

"You may well remember that barely six months ago, you had published the Malaysian flag to accompany a story on Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

"While this office prefers to give you the benefit of the doubt, it is nonetheless most disconcerting that the AWSJ continues to commit such obvious errors when it comes to reporting on Malaysia," she said.

Badariah said the office sincerely hoped that there was no element of mischief on the part of the AWSJ.

Noting that accuracy remained a core fundamental of good journalism, she said the Prime Minister's office hoped that this principle could be upheld by the publication.

In its correction, the AWSJ said the error was entirely unintentional and was not intended to make any implications concerning anyone in Malaysia.

Instead of a bespectacled and clean-shaven Dr Mahathir that everyone is familiar with, the illustration was that of a bearded man with a receding hairline.

Although captioned Mahathir Mohamad, it bore no resemblance whatsoever to the Malaysian Prime Minister.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AHH JK