

'DONG ZONG RISKS VIOLATING LAW'

Group too focused on Chinese education, not multiracial nation, says prime minister

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PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned Chinese educationist group Dong Zong to toe the line and not incite people into fighting one another.

He said the group risked running afoul of the law if it continued on its current course.

"Now if they keep on inciting people to fight against each other, of course that is going against the law. We have freedom of speech, but we are always sensitive about not instigating people of different races to fight against each other.

"But Dong Zong is only talking about one community, forgetting that it is a multiracial country," he said while drawing on Dong Zong's public petition against teaching khat in schools, which it claimed was a subtle form of Islamisation.

Dr Mahathir, however, refused to comment when asked if Dong Zong should be banned.

"I do not know yet, that's up to the police to decide," he said at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport's 21st anniversary celebration here yesterday.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir reiterated that he stood by his statement that Dong Zong was racist. He said the group had only fought for the Chinese despite Malaysia being a multiracial nation.

"When we do something, we must think what the other races would say, and if they are not happy, then you should try and accommodate. But Dong Zong has never said a word about Malaysia. It's always about Chinese education."

He cited the group's objection when he proposed the *Sekolah Wawasan*, or integrated vision school, to bring vernacular and national schools under one roof.

"It's a very racist way of thinking. What's wrong with Malays, Chinese and others going to school together? To have an assembly where all three schools are together? It's an anathema to Dong Zong."

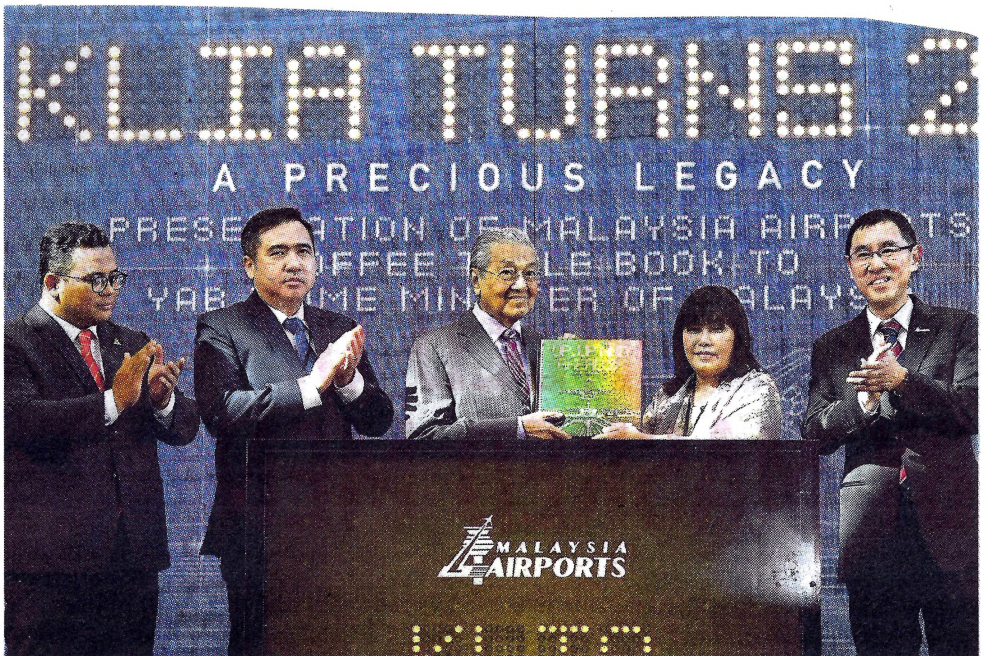
Meanwhile, on renewed calls to extradite controversial preacher Dr Zakir Naik to India, Dr Mahathir said Zakir could not be sent back because he ran the risk of being killed.

"So he is here today, but if any country wants to have him, they are welcome to."

Asked about Dr Zakir's recent remarks at an event on Aug 3, where he reportedly claimed Malaysian Hindus were more loyal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi than the Malaysian prime minister, Dr Mahathir said the question should be directed to the community instead.

Human Resources Minister M. Kula Segaran had called for action to be taken on Dr Zakir and said his position would be raised in the cabinet meeting today.

"It's time for this fugitive foreigner to leave Malaysia and face charges of ter-



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad officiating the Kuala Lumpur International Airport's 21st anniversary celebration in Sepang yesterday. With him are Transport Minister Anthony Loke, Selangor Menteri Besar Amirudin Shari, Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd chairman Tan Sri Zainun Ali (second from right) and group chief executive officer Raja Azmi Raja Nazuddin (right). BERNAMA PIC

rorism and money laundering in India,” said Kula Segaran.

On KLIA’s 21st anniversary, Dr Mahathir said he was as proud of the airport as he was in 1998 when he opened it.

He also paid tribute to the late Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, who was behind KLIA’s “Airport in the Forest, Forest in the Airport” concept.

Later, Dr Mahathir was asked about his dream for KLIA and he said he never thought of low-cost airlines in 1998, but now it was a big industry.

“In future, maybe we (Malaysia) need a space port. Who knows. And you will be travelling three hours to London,” he said, adding that there were such projects proposed for Malaysia.