

## **Zahid: Too many newspapers will confuse M'sians**

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Home Ministry had rejected FZ Daily and Malaysiakini's application for publishing permits to protect the public from the confusion of having access to "too much news".

"The (number of) newspaper publications with approved publishing permits is sufficient considering the number of readers in the country," Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said in a parliamentary written reply Tuesday.

"Denying the applications from FZ Daily and Malaysiakini is an early step towards controlling the flood of newspaper publications that may confuse the people if there are too many news being published by all sorts of newspapers."

He added that Malaysiakini and FZ Daily – both online portals – were seen to be inclined towards publishing sensational and controversial news just to attract readers.

Ahmad Zahid said this in a response to a question from Johari Abdul (PKR-Sungai Petani) on the reason why the Home Ministry had denied publishing permits for the two portals.

Last month, FZ Daily, which has yet to hit newsstands, found its permit revoked just hours after the publisher, The Edge Communications, was granted leave to initiate proceedings against the Home Ministry for deferring its initial approval of the permits.

Meanwhile, in August 2010, Mkini Dotcom applied for a permit to publish 40,000 copies of a daily for the Klang Valley, but its application was rejected by the Home Ministry.

Mkini Dotcom filed a judicial review application, where it named the Home Ministry secretary-general, Home Minister and the Malaysian government as respondents.

In October 2012, High Court judge Abang Iskandar Abang Hashim ruled that the Home Ministry's rejection was "improper and irrational".

Last year, the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court's decision when the Home Ministry appealed to reverse the original judgement.

"We are in agreement with the High Court and are dismissing the appeal," Justice Alizatul Khair Osman, who lead a three-member team, said after hearing submissions.

The judges ordered the government to pay RM5,000 in costs to Mkini Dotcom.

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