

Websites under probe for 'inaccurate' reports

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KUANTAN: Police are investigating several websites which allegedly carried inaccurate and speculative reports on the pepper spray incident involving Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Friday.

Deputy Internal Security Minister Datuk Fu Ah Kiow said yesterday that action would be taken against the website owners if they had breached the Sedition Act.

Fu said the contents of the offending reports would be

analysed and whether the websites had promptly retracted them.

The websites were not named.

Fu said statements carrying the qualification "believed to be" would still be deemed irresponsible even if they were later retracted.

"The initial impact of such speculative reports may not only be damaging, but could also be 'irreversible'," said Fu, who is also the Kuantan

Member of Parliament, after attending a community programme at SMK Sungai Soi near here.

At least one website flashed a report under its newsbreak segment on Friday which, among other things, indicated the possibility that the former prime minister was attacked by members of the police special operations force.

The report, filed shortly after the 10.30am incident at

the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport, Kota Baru, was retracted an hour later.

Fu said the Government was keeping to its promise of not censoring Internet access in the country but cautioned those using it as a news medium to be responsible and not break the law, particularly when it involved sensitive issues.

He denied a report on Thursday which quoted him as saying that the Govern-

ment was planning to amend the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 to place websites under its control.

"What I said was that we are studying the Act to see if it meets our current needs. I never said we were going to amend it."

On the issuance of permits for public gatherings, Fu said the police based their decisions after careful studies of the potential risks they posed.