

MAHATHIR - THATCHER

82 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 4 (BERNAMA) -- /DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE TURNED DOWN BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST TO MEET HIM IN LONDON DUE TO THE TIME CONSTRAINTS.

+I WISH TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT I DID NOT INTENTIONALLY GIVE MRS. THATCHER THE REBUFF ... IF THE TIME IS SUITABLE I WILL SURELY ATTEND THE LUNCHEON WITH HER, +HE ADDED ON ARRIVAL HOME FROM LONDON AFTER ATTENDING THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HIS BRITISH COUNTERPART FIXED THE LUNCHEON DATE ON OCT. 1 BUT HE ONLY ARRIVED IN LONDON DURING THE NIGHT ON THAT DAY.

BESIDES, HE ADDED, MRS. THATCHER COULD NOT SET THE DATE OF APPOINTMENT FOR SOME OTHER TIME AS SHE WAS BUSY MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEETING IN BLACK-POOL AND ALSO BECAUSE SHE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A FAREAST TOUR.

+OCT. 1 WAS THE ONLY DATE SUITABLE TO HER, + DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID, QUASHING SPECULATIONS THAT HIS REFUSAL TO MEET MRS. THATCHER WAS MEANT TO SNUB BRITAIN DUE TO THE STRAINED RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN RECENTLY. -- MORE 2053/PA

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MAHATHIR - THATCHER 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR AND HIS ENTOURAGE MADE A ONE-NIGHT STOPOVER IN THE BRITISH CAPITAL AFTER MAKING HIS MAIDEN ADDRESS IN THE UN ASSEMBLY.

HE EXPLAINED THAT HIS STAY IN LONDON WAS JUST TO REST BEFORE HE CONTINUED WITH HIS DAILY ROUTINE OF WORK ONCE HE RETURNED HOME.

-- BERNAMA 2054/PA