

PM: MAS move on jet engines in its interest

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon.

— Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today defended MAS' decision to use a Boeing 747 with a Pratt and Whitney engine instead of a Rolls Royce engine as being "in its best interests".

The Prime Minister said it would serve MAS best if it used planes equipped with engines "that are considered the best".

He rejected the suggestion from some quarters that Malaysia's decision not to use the Rolls Royce engine was a slap in the face for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Speaking to newsmen at a brief Press conference at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang on his return from the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Nassau, he said: "It's a business deal as far as I am concerned."

Asked to explain the rationale behind the decision to direct Petronas to buy the plane and lease it to MAS, he said the Government did not want MAS to expend too much money on capital

equipment.

The Prime Minister was commenting on a report that Rolls Royce Ltd has threatened Malaysia with a \$40 million lawsuit over the alleged breach of contract to purchase Rolls Royce engines for MAS aircraft. (See Page 4)

Referred to reports that Datuk Mak Hon Kam had expressed his lack of confidence in the MCA ad hoc committee appointed to supervise the party's elections, he said: "I do not want to interfere."

On a Press statement by MCA secretary-general Yeoh Poh San alleging that Datuk Mak had told him and MCA central committee member C.S. Wong on Aug 10 that Dr Mahathir wanted him (Datuk Mak) to be the MCA president, he said: "I am glad to hear that. (Is the report saying that) I elected the MCA president, is it?"

The Prime Minister, who was in a jovial mood despite nursing a bad cold, jokingly chided newsmen for not asking about his cold.

"You are not interested in my cold? It's a Bahamian cold," he said.