

# PM willing to attend Asean summit

By AHMAD A. TALIB

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night Malaysia is willing to attend an Asean summit meeting regardless of its venue, but the conference must have substantive issues for discussion.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia would agree to take part in the proposed summit even if it is held in the Philippines, where the long-standing issue concerning the Philippine claims on Sabah has been an irritant on bilateral relations.

Dr Mahathir was clarifying Malaysia's position on a proposal that Asean heads of government meet in a formal conference similar to the previous gathering held in Kuala Lumpur in 1977. Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Mochtar Kusu-

maatmadja last week said the next summit will be next year, during which new targets for the next 10 years can be set.

By rotation, the Philippines would be the host of the association's third summit.

The question of an Asean summit has been raised frequently in recent years as the association moves to restructure itself and review its relations with non-members. Speaking at a question and answer session at a National Press Club dinner in Kuala Lumpur last night, the Prime Minister clarified: "We agree to take part in any summit, no matter where it is convened, including the Philippines. But we can't make a state visit to the Philippines.

"We can attend the summit in 1987, when Asean will be 20 years old. But we need to know whether the meeting will be an occasion for celebration or for discussing specific issues."

The Prime Minister, questioned on a wide range of issues for about one hour after his speech, said the government has discharged its responsibility pertaining to calls by various quarters to release the inquiry committee's final report on the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance loans scandal.

He said the government has kept its promise, and the Press, which received copies of the report yesterday, will now be in a similar position as the gov-

ernment where legal proceedings are concern.

He said the government had no choice but to make public the report because of the clamour by various groups and individuals for its publication. They could not even wait for the report to be studied closely, he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir commented in his speech to the diners that Malaysian journalists are "by and large" free from traits that seem to denigrate their homeland.

He reminded the Press that the government does not want to be praised. "If it's the truth, report it. Don't create a public opinion and then fear this creature of your own creation," he said.