

PM: SPEAK WITH CARE

'All should stop making irresponsible statements'

By IDZAN ISMAIL

PETALING JAYA, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on all Malaysians, including Cabinet Ministers, to stop making "irresponsible statements" that could affect peace and stability.

"Everybody makes irresponsible statements ... therefore everybody should stop it. I am advising everyone, not just the Ministers," he told reporters at Subang airport on returning from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver, Canada.

His advice comes in the wake of rumours of racial tension following the incident where a soldier was reported to have gone on a shooting spree in the city, killing one person and injuring two others. A suspect

surrendered himself to the police on Monday.

Commenting on the incident, Dr Mahathir said he did not understand why people should think it would cause racial tension.

"Everything can cause racial tension if everyone thinks along that line," he said, adding that the incident was just another criminal case and had nothing to do with racial issues.

"The suspect killed a Malay man and a Chinese was wounded. Why should there be race (issue) involved in this," he said.

He criticised the Press for playing up the story. He said everyone should be committed to creating a stable and prosperous country.

"Do not think that this is a role only for the Government and politicians. Can I request newspapers not to publish (the irresponsible statements) even if the politicians make them?"

Newspapers should play a responsible role if they wanted the

country to be stable, Dr Mahathir said.

"You should not provoke others. You should not ask a person to say this and that and then ask another person to comment on so and so saying this ... then you create a quarrel.

"Sometimes, newspapers make things very difficult for us."

Asked whether he would call on the MCA to hold talks with Umno in view of the "cold relationship" between them, Dr Mahathir said it was not necessary as there were no differences.

"We sit at the same table and we are on talking terms. (MCA deputy president) Datuk Lee Kim Sai and other MCA leaders are here to receive me ... Again, it's the newspapers which make it sound very bad."

On the stock market collapse on Monday, Dr Mahathir said he did not think that it had any connection with the situation in Malaysia as it **happened everywhere in the world.**