

PM raps foreign newsmen

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today certain foreign journalists were liars who have lost their credibility even in their own countries.

He said this when asked to comment on a recently released documentary in Australia accusing Malaysia of being a police State and a British drama which portrayed Malaysians as barbarians.

"It takes a barbarian to recognise a barbarian," was the Prime Minister's immediate response.

Asked how Malaysia could counter these activities, he said: "We can only explain what is the truth.

"But if you have a pack of liars who will not believe the truth when you tell them, who come here and see only people

who are against us — there is precious little we can do."

He said freedom of the Press was not freedom to tell lies.

"We are not a big power and we do not control the international Press. So they are free to do what they like.

"What is important to us is that people who have faith in Malaysia come here, they invest here, they come and see us."

Asked if these negative media reports had discouraged investors, Dr Mahathir said people who had seen them had told him that they found it hard to believe because they know Malaysia.

"And people have come to regard the Western Press as quite inaccurate in their re-

porting. They are always biased.

"Even in England, the people don't believe in their own Press."

Asked about the local Press, Dr Mahathir said he did not want to praise them as people would then accuse him of "controlling the media".

"I don't control the Press and I don't censor them. It is the Press that censor themselves."

He said they could criticise the Government so long as they did not stir up trouble or cause racial disharmony.

For instance, the Government has been criticised by the Press for developing the Selangor Club Padang.

"But if they tell lies, we will sue them."