

Govt may confirm weapons purchase with Britain

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government may seek confirmation from Britain on whether it will sell to Malaysia certain weapons needed for the country's defence during his visit to that country soon.

The Prime Minister said the Government was constantly studying the weaponry needs of the armed forces.

The purchase of weapons for the country's defence was important but this would depend on the nation's financial situation, he told reporters after a dialogue with armed forces commanders at the Defence Ministry here.

"When we have a lot of money, we will buy more equipment, and when we have less money we will buy within that amount," he said.

Asked whether the purchase of weapons would be one of the main topics of his discussions with the British Government, he said: "The purchase of weapons is not an unusual matter".

Jet fighters

On whether he had discussed this matter with his British counterpart, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, when she made a two-hour stopover here recently, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Government had discussed the possibility of buying military equipment from Britain.

Asked whether Malaysia would buy the latest British "Tornado" jet fighters, he replied: "Any equipment to be bought, big or small, will depend on the financial situation".

"We are identifying our needs and will try to buy the equipment when we have the funds," he said.

He said the Government might spend some money on the defence needs of the country, adding that if the financial situation of the country improved the Government would also have to think about national development and resolving the salary claims of the civil servants. — Bernama