

# Dr M: Milestone in UK-Malaysia ties

# 'Pact on seizure of traffickers' assets

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Malaysia and Britain today signed an agreement enabling joint action to investigate and prosecute dadah traffickers and confiscate their profits and assets.**

The Agreement of Mutual Assistance will allow joint action between the law enforcement units of the two countries to trace, freeze and confiscate the enormous proceeds from dadah trafficking.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. & hathir Mohamad and his British counterpart Mrs Margaret Thatcher signed the bilateral agreement at the Prime Minister's Department here.

Mrs Thatcher, who arrived today for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, had earlier held talks with Dr Mahathir.

## Step forward

Dr Mahathir said the agreement would provide the legal framework for both governments to assist each other in the investigation of dadah trafficking.

"Significantly, it will also enable us to seize and confiscate the ill-gotten gains of those who seek to profit by corrupting and destroying our societies with drugs," he said after the signing ceremony.

Dr Mahathir believed that the agreement would "send a clear message" to domestic and international dadah traffickers that there was "no safe haven, not for them and not for their ill-gotten gains".

"It is my hope that there will be a proliferation of such interlocking agreements as the pace of international co-operation against drug abuse gathers momentum."

He said the signing of the agreement

represented not just a milestone in the two countries' multilateral efforts, particularly at the United Nations, in the fight against the dadah scourge, but also "a step forward" in their close bilateral relationship.

"It is especially fitting that this agreement is signed on the eve of CHOGM because it is based on the 'Scheme relating to mutual assistance in criminal matters within the Commonwealth' which was considered by the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Harare in 1986."

## Stiff sentences

Mrs Thatcher said the agreement was a further collaboration in efforts to check the activities of dadah traffickers.

Dadah trafficking is a world problem and there must be concerted efforts to catch those who perpetrate the crime.

She said the agreement was significant as the ill-gotten gains of dadah traffickers could be traced beyond their own countries.

She added that a special legislation on dadah trafficking was passed in Britain two years ago. Britain has also signed nine similar bilateral agreements. The agreement with Malaysia is its tenth.

"So, there is a network closing in on traffickers."

Mrs Thatcher said dadah trafficking could be attacked by first destroying the "deadly crops"; second, persuading people not to buy the drugs; and third, making it clear to those who sell dadah and get tremendous proceeds from the sale that they cannot escape the law.

"We have to catch them and give them stiff sentences."

She praised Malaysia for its leadership in the fight against the drug problem.