

PM dares rivals to prove there is no press freedom

MASJID TANAH, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad challenged the Opposition today to prove their allegations that there was no press freedom in the country.

The Prime Minister also dared them to deny the existence of newspapers which criticised the Government and its leaders but still operated freely.

"We have not and we will not take action against these newspapers unless they print lewd pictures or publish articles which can cause racial hatred and riots," he said when officiating at the ground-breaking ceremony for the \$12 million Kuala Linggi bridge, 18km from here.

Dr Mahathir said newspapers such as the *Rocket*, *Harakah*, *Mingguan Kota* and even some Chinese and Tamil tabloids

carried stories discrediting the Government but the Opposition always claimed that there was no press freedom.

He said that if the other newspapers in the country did not want to print the lies of the Opposition, it was because they were free to do so.

Dr Mahathir said it was not wrong for some newspapers to be supportive of the Government and for others to support the Opposition.

Dr Mahathir said the DAP which owned the *Rocket* sold the paper to the public although it was meant to be a party organ meant only for members.

He said the Government could revoke the publishing permit of the *Rocket* and other newspapers.

"But we have not because we believe in democracy," he added.