

Illegal factories will have their goods seized. Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba will launch the operation in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, he said. Speaking at a news conference in

Some Aussie quarters causing mischief: PM

By SHARIFF HAMID

THE Government has identified certain quarters in Australia who are trying their best to block investors from coming to the country and to tarnish Malaysia's image abroad, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night.

"Our relationship with the Australian Government is good and in accordance with diplomatic procedure. We don't understand why certain quarters in that country dislike us and spread baseless facts about Malaysia," he added.

"We would like to be friendly with all countries but we cannot be friendly with those who do not want to be friendly with us. We are not going to protest against the irresponsible actions as we think it would be useless."

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said those involved have used various methods to try to frighten away potential investors, including using films and documentaries.

He said the films and documentaries merely condemn the country, and they affect Malaysia's efforts to woo foreign investors.

"At present, foreign investment in the country has been increasing tremendously as investors find Malaysia very attractive.

"We are worried the healthy trend will slacken due to the acts of irresponsible quarters in Australia who keep on spreading baseless rumours and defamatory statements about Malaysia abroad," he told reporters after handing

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over donations to Muslim orphans in the Federal Territory at the breaking of the fast in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He added that the irresponsible and fishy actions of these quarters to jeopardise the country's economy have had no effect on the growth of investment in Malaysia.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir confirmed that he is healthy and hopes that there will be no more rumours spread by certain irresponsible quarters questioning his health. "I don't know how many bypass operations these rumours say I have to undergo," he added in a light vein.

He also said the Cabinet has approved US\$100,000 (US\$1 = M\$2.75) in relief aid to the Red Crescent Society to help Kurdish refugees in Iraq.

"The aid is small but it is only an initial contribution and we are prepared to give more if needed. This aid is a show of sympathy and sorrow for the Kurds, who have to face another problem after the Gulf war.

"The Malaysian Government will not protest officially to the Iraqi Government but regrets how a government can be cruel to its own people. A democratic government like Iraq has to get support from its people and not endanger them," he added.

The Prime Minister hopes other countries will not interfere and instigate any parties in Iraq as doing so will only worsen the situation.

"The Kurds are a victim of such interference. They thought that the US, which gave its support at the early stage, would continue to help them fight against Saddam Hussein, but now they have been left to carry the fight alone."