

# Trade with Australia despite strains

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JITRA, Sat. — Malaysia will continue trading with Australia even though relations between the two countries "are not at their best", Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said the relations, however, had not deteriorated to a stage where Malaysia would adopt a "buy Australian last" policy.

Speaking to reporters after being briefed on the development of Kubang Pasu by district officials, he said trade with Australia would continue although the bal-

ance of trade between both countries was in Australia's favour.

He also said Malaysia would not impose any form of restriction on the import of Australian goods as it believed in the free enterprise system.

This, despite the fact that certain Malaysian goods, such as batteries, might be banned in Australia.

Describing the relationship between Malaysia and Australia today as "proper, not more than that", he added that it was not that of "best friends".

Dr Mahathir said the relationship was based on the

fact that each was an independent country.

He said the current level of relationship between Australia and Malaysia was the result of Australia's attitude towards certain steps taken by this country in the past.

For instance, Australia had regarded Malaysia's treatment of dadah traffickers as "barbarous" and described the steps taken on national security in 1987 as "undemocratic".

Australia seemed to regard that it should set the standard on certain matters and wanted others to follow these standards, he said.