

Dr M: I'm willing to discuss ties with Hawke

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is willing to discuss Malaysia-Australia relations with Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke when they meet in London for the Commonwealth Heads of Government appraisal group meeting in June.

The Prime Minister said he was willing to meet Mr Hawke as "such matters can be discussed".

He said this to newsmen covering the Hari Raya open house at Seri Perdana yesterday on being asked to comment on a report quoting Mr Hawke in Canberra as saying that he would discuss "delicate issues" with Dr Mahathir during the meeting.

On allegations by certain Australian officials that Dr Mahathir did not answer a telephone call from Mr Hawke, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't remember receiving any calls from him."

The report quoted Mr Hawke as saying that he had not had an opportunity to hold direct discussions with Dr Mahathir on the matter.

Mr Hawke stated last Monday that he wanted to end diplomatic wrangling with Malaysia that began when an Australian television network aired a fiction-al programme entitled *Embassy* last October.

Dr Mahathir had subsequently described Malaysia's relationship with Australia as "proper, not more than that".

He had said the relationship was based on the fact that each was an independent country.

Dr Mahathir had also said that 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".

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

Speaking to newsmen this evening after receiving delegations attending his open house, Dr Mahathir called on Malaysians to prepare the ground work to ensure that the Government's vision of Malaysia becoming a fully developed nation by the year 2020 is a reality.

The Prime Minister said all sectors must play a positive role in contributing to

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Dr M: The people must play their role too

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wards this objective.

"Making our vision a reality is not the responsibility of the Government or the Prime Minister alone. This is something that all of us must do together.

"The private sector, the workers and government administration must work hand in hand and if this is done right now, I am sure we can achieve our goal of turning the country into a fully developed one by the year 2020," Dr Mahathir said.

On the Palestinian issue, he said Malaysia favoured the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East to seek a comprehensive solution to the problem.

The Prime Minister said the people of the Middle East, particularly the Palestinians, must be represented by elected representatives of their own choice.

"No other party, not even the Israelis, can dictate the type of leadership the Palestinians should have.

"If anyone imposes leaders of their own choice on the Palestinians, then they are not being democratic.

"We cannot ourselves nominate leaders ... they must be chosen by the Palestinians," he added.