

Rich nations rapped for being racist

By SHARIFF HAMID

THE Prime Minister expressed disappointment that attention is given only to Asia where the people are not whites when adverse decisions on issues such as the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) are made.

"While we want to see Eastern European countries develop rapidly, why are there no trade restrictions on these nations? Why only in Asia?" Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad asked.

"I cannot help but notice that there are developed countries which are racist. They accuse us of being racist but they themselves are the real racists who only care for the well-being of the whites," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur during the weekend.

He added this is another example of the big countries bullying the smaller ones, and that they take it upon themselves to decide what is good or bad for other countries.

Their freedom of the press appears to mean only reporting on the negative aspects of the small and developing countries, while the good things escape coverage, he said.

"But the bigger and stronger countries can do and say anything

they like, even though it is wrong," he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was commenting on recent press reports that more export items to the US from Malaysia, such as radio broadcast receivers, telephone sets, stearic acid, vulcanised rubber, thread and safety pins may soon lose their GSP status.

These items have been said to be reaching the competitive need limit (CNL) status and therefore no longer eligible for GSP.

The CNL stipulates that GSP privileges will not be accorded to specified categories of goods whose exports to the US exceed US\$88 million (US\$1=M\$2.76) a year or account for 50 per cent or more of the US import market for any particular category of goods.

Malaysia is the third largest beneficiary of the US GSP with exports under the scheme accounting for some 11 per cent of Malaysia's total exports to the US in 1989.

Malaysian products will cost about 5 per cent more without the GSP privileges. Products on the US GSP list include electrical-electronic appliances, rubber products, timber products, watches, wall clocks and parts, machinery, toys and sports goods.