

Western media biased, says PM

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By NIZAM ISA

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PETALING JAYA: The western media have always been biased and unfair when reporting about the South, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said it was normal practice for the western media to "black out" anything good about the South, preferring instead to highlight the negative.

"Freedom of the press is meaningless unless it means that only news that interest people are printed," he told reporters at the Subang airport upon his return from a three-day unofficial visit to Tokyo.

Citing an example, Dr

Mahathir said his speech at the 48th UN General Assembly recently was not published by the western media, although the issues he raised were vital and well-received by delegates from the South.

(In his speech at the UN General Assembly, the Prime Minister called for the organisation to end hypocrisy and double standards in the interest of the world.)

Dr Mahathir also said that the fact the western media did not report anything positive about the South showed that there was no freedom of the press there.

"There is no such thing as a free press, whether in developed or develop-

ing countries. It is because the (western) press is controlled, anything good about developing countries is not published.

"This is because the people (who are in control) have other motives and want to make developing countries look bad," he said.

He also said Malaysia was using the media to inform the people and preserve culture.

On his recent meeting with media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Dr Mahathir said he discussed Murdoch's huge control over the international press.

"The fact that he, a single person, has such a huge control over the in-

ternational press is not healthy," he said.

On his visit to Japan and his meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, Dr Mahathir said the Japanese leader had pointed out that the appreciation of the yen was driven by market forces and was beyond the control of the government.

Dr Mahathir also said that the yen's appreciation had resulted in Malaysia paying more to service its yen loans.

Malaysian importers also had to pay more for Japanese goods, especially capital equipment and car components, including parts for the national car, he added.