

We have no quarrel with Britain, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night bilateral relations between Malaysia and Britain should not be affected by the trade sanctions initiated against British companies.

"We have no quarrel with the British Government," he told reporters after breaking fast at Bangunan Tabung Haji yesterday.

However, he said the British press was just too quick to ac-

cuse Malaysian leaders of being corrupt.

He was referring to the London-based *The Sunday Times* report on Feb 20 which claimed he (Dr Mahathir) had asked for and obtained from George Wimpey International US\$50,000 as earnest payment for its bid for an aluminium smelter building contract.

Commenting on the Cabinet's decision to shut the door to participation by British companies in government projects, he

said:

"We learn this from the West. They have often used economic weapons to force us to become democratic, to respect human rights and the environment."

He said British High Commissioner Duncan Slater had met him yesterday afternoon in a bid to seek a withdrawal of trade sanctions.

"He came too late."

He said British Prime Minister John Major had also been in

touch with him indirectly, regretting the decision.

He said the Government would not file any formal protest as it would be ineffective.

He said the British media still had a colonial mentality which assumed people who were not like them were corrupted.

Asked what the British media could do to amend the situation, he said he was not interested in an apology but hoped they would report the truth.