

British media reports now better, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there has been an improvement in British media reports on Malaysia after the Malaysian Government banned new Government contracts for British companies following adverse reports on the country.

"We notice an improvement, particularly after the person (Andrew Neil, editor of the Sunday Times) who started such reports had been transferred," he said.

"We will see whether his transfer will bring about a drastic difference in the (British media) reports," *Bernama* quoted him telling reporters at the airport after welcoming back Malaysia's badminton team which took part in the Thomas Cup tournament in Jakarta.

Neil, 44, has been seconded to New York from next month to launch a current affairs programme of the Fox television network. He will be the executive editor of the new programme for seven months.

"In fact, he (Neil) was the cause (for the Government's decision to ban new Government contracts for British companies). Now that he is no more there, we will see whether there is any (drastic) difference in the British media reports (on Malaysia)," Dr Mahathir said.

In London, Neil told *Reuters* he stood by his coverage of alleged corruption in the Malaysian Government but was pleased at signs Mahathir may relax the ban.

Neil said he would remain editor of the *Sunday Times* while on secondment in the US.