

# We will review ban on contracts, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that following recent developments the Government will review the ban on the award of contracts to British firms.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the hope expressed by British Prime Minister John Major that Malaysia would lift the ban as soon as possible. Major had expressed this in his letter to Dr Mahathir which was delivered by British Trade Minister Richard Needham here yesterday.

"Since Neil and his friend have been kicked out, we will review it (the ban)," he told reporters at the Family Day organised by the Home Ministry at the Taman Tasik Perdana here.

Andrew Neil was the editor of the *Sunday Times*. His bribery allegations against Dr Mahathir led to the ban in late February.

Dr Mahathir said: "As far as we are concerned, he has been sacked. *Sampah masyarakat* (black sheep) like him deserve to be sacked.

"Neil has lost his credibility. People do not trust him anymore. They know he has a personal vendetta. He created nonsensical things ... it seemed I had wanted US\$50,000 (RM130,000) and then he admitted that it was not true."

The *Sunday Times* carried an article linking Dr Mahathir to an alleged US\$50,000 bribe from construction firm Wimpey in connection with a smelting plant.

Neil refused to apologise or print a retraction although Wimpey denied that it had given any bribe.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia's decision not to award new contracts to British firms did not affect bilateral co-operation, adding that "trade goes on".

He said that co-operation between Ministers and officers of the two countries were also not affected.

Asked to comment on the Internal Security Act (ISA) which Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday would be selectively reviewed, Dr Mahathir said the legislation would not be abolished.

This is to ensure that