

♥09/06/17-58MST

U GE 09-06 00183 RA084

aae

Mahathir-Britain

DR M DENT'S KNOWLEDGE OF LIFTING OF GOVT BAN AS STATED BY NEEDHAM

bm

MIAR, June 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was unaware of the possibility of the government lifting a ban on government contracts for British firms within six weeks as stated by British Trade Minister Richard Needham yesterday.

Asked about Needham's statement, he said he had not been informed of the matter.

"I do not know, maybe he had information which I have yet to receive," he told reporters after attending a lunch hosted by the Johor Barisan Nasional at the Dewan Jubli Intan, here.

Needham reportedly said yesterday that a decision (on the lifting of the ban) will most likely be taken in the next one to six weeks.

Needham, who was on a four-day visit to Malaysia from Saturday, said Britain might be pressured to retaliate if Malaysia's decision to ban government contracts for British firms remained in force for long. -- more

JO MGN

♥09/06/18-14MST

U GE 09-06 00102 RA086

aae

Rptng

Mahathir-Britain 2 (last) Muar

Asked to comment on Needham's views, Dr Mahathir said that was Britain's domestic problem.

"The pressure they face is their problem. We are also pressured. There will be pressure in any government," he said.

Malaysia announced a ban on new government contracts for British firms in February after British media reports accused British-Malaysian deals of being corrupt.

The decision, which went into force on Feb 23, has resulted in losses amounting to billions of ringgit for British firms. -- Bernama

JO OM MGN