

Businessman's trip to Israel: Dr M has no knowledge

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he had no knowledge that Malaysian businessman Tengku Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman had recently visited Israel and had discussions with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"I have to check on it first," the Prime Minister said at a Press conference after the Umno special assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here, when asked if he was aware of the report.

He denied the claim that Tengku Abdullah's visit to Israel was on behalf of the Malaysian Government.

"I too want to know the purpose behind his visit to Israel. But I think it was only for business."

Asked if action would be taken against Tengku Abdullah for the visit, the Prime Minister said the law did not provide for the Gov-

ernment to punish those who went to Israel.

On Tengku Abdullah's visit being described by Israel television as a political breakthrough to establish ties between the two countries, Dr Mahathir said he had exchanged letters with Rabin three times after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation began negotiations for a peace pact.

On the contents of their letters, the Prime Minister said Rabin had asked Malaysia to recognise the country, but Malaysia was not convinced of Israel's stand with regard to its negotiations for peace with the PLO.

"We asked Israel to be sincere in the negotiations," he said, adding that Malaysia had no ties with Israel now.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also said that Wisma Putra had no knowledge of the reports on Tengku Abdullah's visit to Israel.