

# PM laughs off report of meet with Rabin

BT 16/7/94

By AZHAR GHAZALI

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not meet Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Paris as reported by a foreign news agency.

When asked last night, he laughed off the report that said he had met Rabin during his official visit to Paris.

"Why do I need to see him?" the Prime Minister asked.

Rabin was in the French capital to receive a Unesco peace prize with Foreign Minister Shimon Perez and Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman Yasser Arafat on July 6.

Israeli television had reported a meeting between the Malaysian and Israeli prime ministers.

"It was a case where we stayed in the same hotel. All government visitors to Paris stayed at the de Crillon Hotel. I stayed on the third floor and he was on the second," Dr Mahathir said after chairing the Kelantan Umno state liaison meeting at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur last night.

Dr Mahathir suspected that the report by the Israeli television had malicious intentions to create problems for himself and the Malaysian Government.

"They always have malicious intentions. They never have good intentions," he said.

The Prime Minister also said that the visit by Melewar Corp group chairman Tunku Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman, who is the brother of the King, to Israel recently was on the request of the Israeli Government.

"The report said that I (Dr Mahathir) sent him. Obviously, he (Rabin) wanted to speak to Tunku Abdullah on political matters.

"He (Tunku Abdullah) went there to explore business opportunities... not only with Israel but also with the Palestinians," the Prime Minister said.

He noted that it was wrong for Tunku Abdullah to go to Israel, but added that there was also a case of a local journalist having gone to Israel and no action was taken although he was using a passport of another country.

Dr Mahathir also said that his visits to several states lately had no connections with the possibility of holding an early general election.

He described it as a "normal exercise" in his capacity as the Prime Minister.

He said he could not make such visits before because he was busy with the visits of foreign dignitaries and the need to attend official functions overseas.

The Prime Minister also said that the Cabinet meeting to be held in Penang next Wednesday is a normal one, adding that it is not unusual for the Government to hold its meeting outside Kuala Lumpur once in a while.

"There is no special agenda," he said.

On party matters, Dr Mahathir, who is the chairman of Kelantan state liaison committee, said the meeting discussed the appointment of chairmen of pro-tem divisional branches.

He said the matter has yet to be finalised, but added it was a good meeting and "most of the problems" have been resolved.