

Dr M: I didn't meet Israeli Premier

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**By Manan Osman
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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight denied that he had met Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin during his visit to France as reported by a foreign news agency.

"I happened to be staying in the same hotel with Rabin," the Prime Minister said when asked to comment on an AFP report on the matter.

AFP had quoted Israeli television as saying that the two leaders had a secret meeting in Paris early this month.

The meeting was said to have taken place when the Israeli Premier went there to receive a Unesco peace prize with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman Yasser Arafat.

Dr Mahathir had made an official visit to France from July 6 to 9 and stayed at the Hotel de Crillon in Paris.

The Prime Minister said all State guests stayed at the hotel which belonged to the Government.

Rabin, he said, was staying on the second floor while he was staying on the third floor.

"I have not met him, why should I," he told reporters after chairing the Kelantan Umno liaison committee meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre.

On a recent foreign agency report that Melewar Corporation group chairman Tunku Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman had visited Israel and had talks with Rabin and Peres, Dr Mahathir said the former's visit was at the invitation of the Israeli Government.

"It has nothing to do with the Malaysian Government," he said.

He said that Tunku Abdullah had entered Israel, using his own passport and had looked for business opportunities not only with Israel but also Palestine.

However, Dr Mahathir said, Tunku Abdullah did not try to deceive the Malaysian Government.

Asked whether it was wrong for Tunku Abdullah to enter Israel, he said it was but added that an Utusan (Malaysia) representative had also gone to Israel in the past, but no action was taken against him.