

Repeat call to lift arms embargo on Bosnia

JITRA, Sun. — Malaysia today repeated its call to the United Nations to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina to allow its people to defend themselves against Serb aggression.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) should withdraw their forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina and allow the Bosnians to defend themselves.

"I have made the suggestion a long time ago. If the UN and Nato are unwilling to face the danger to their soldiers, it is best they pull out from the country and allow the people of Bosnia to obtain the supply of weapons to defend themselves.

"Where is justice when we cannot help others and at the same time we don't allow others to help those in need," he said when asked by reporters to comment on the worsening situation in Bosnia where two French peacekeepers were killed in Sarajevo yesterday after Bosnian Serbs took 93 UN soldiers as human shields against Nato air strikes.

He was speaking to reporters at a thanksgiving function at Kampung Pantai Halban here.

The French soldiers were killed as the French units fought to regain control of a bridge seized by Bosnian Serbs.

Yesterday, when commenting on Nato strikes on Serbs positions, Dr Mahathir described the move as "merely play-acting".

He also said the UN was not serious in resolving the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and he was not convinced the military air strikes over the past few days would continue because the UN feared its soldiers would be cornered by the Serbs and subsequently dragged into a war.

Asked about the tussle among leaders of the opposition parties to be the next Opposition Leader, Dr Mahathir said the Government would not interfere in the selection.

"I don't think of anything. That is their business. They can choose anybody. It is up to them. I don't want to touch on this."

Asked on the role played by the Opposition Leader in Parliament, Dr Mahathir said: "In the past, they never played any role at all. (Lim) Kit Siang was an absolute failure as an Opposition Leader. It's no different whether he is an Opposition Leader or not a leader ... no different."

Dr Mahathir was also

asked about speculation that Tan Sri Osman Aroff was an interim Menteri Besar.

"All Menteri Besar are temporary until they cease to be Menteri Besar. How temporary is temporary... we have to wait, maybe five years, maybe 10 years. It is still temporary. There is no permanent Menteri Besar and no permanent Prime Minister also."

On the speculation, the Prime Minister said in jest: "Speculation, they can speculate ... that you will

become Governor of Penang or Sabah... I will become Governor of Penang, yes, I am looking forward to that."

Asked why former Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, who is now State Assemblyman for Kuah, rejected the offer to become a State Exco member, Dr Mahathir said: "I do not know whether he rejected... so we wait."

Asked whether the offer was made to Sanusi, he said: "That is not for me to say yes or no."