

# West even more corrupt than Asia, says Dr M

KUALA NERANG, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Western countries should stop calling Asian countries corrupt because they themselves were worse.

He said Westerners should look at themselves in the mirror before accusing Asians of being corrupt.

"Why are they not looking at the rampant corruption in Europe or America? Why don't they compare with the corruption in Europe?"

"French, British and Italians are also corrupt. But they only consider themselves as superior and clean whereas others are dirty," Dr Mahathir said when asked to comment on a *Fortune Magazine* report which alleged that certain Asian countries were giving American companies a "nightmarish legal dilemma" because of corruption in these countries.

The report alleged that in some Asian countries, American businessmen had to pay off officials to ensure their projects took off smoothly.

Dr Mahathir was at Pedu lake to officiate Maju Holdings' Desa Utara Pedu Lake Resort, about 60km from here.

Dr Mahathir said during his tenure as the Prime Minister, he had come across the son of a Minister who recommended his friend to another Prime Minister to seek a business contract.

"This can also be interpreted as corruption but they consider themselves superior and therefore they don't regard such practice as corruption," he added.

Dr Mahathir said it had become a habit among Western countries to label Asian countries as corrupt.

"What about European corruption? America is not so clean compared with Singapore," he said.

Dr Mahathir said some Western businessmen were quick to accuse others of being corrupt when they failed to get projects.

"They would approach well-known businessmen who know Ministers to be their business partners.

"When they are successful they are quiet but when they fail, they will accuse the successful person as getting it through corruption," he added.

Dr Mahathir advised the West not to make general assumptions that Asians were corrupt.

"What about American corruption, European corruption, what about the lobby system in America?"

"In America, if you don't pay the lobbyists, you cannot get anything in America. Isn't that corruption? We don't have the lobby system in Malaysia but they have.

"They are snooty, always looking down their noses seeing other people as inferior ... this makes me very annoyed," he added.

Asked about the introduction of small trading lots at the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange from Sept 1, Dr Mahathir said the system was to allow more people to buy the high-priced shares.

"Sometimes the share value is too high and if we ask investors to buy at least 1,000 shares, they may not have the funds.

"Therefore to enable more investors to buy the shares, we reduce the trading size from 1,000 shares per lot to 200 shares.

"This is our way of being equitable. This is to give the poorer people the chance to buy some shares," he added.