

# 'Press eager to play up negative issues'

SHAH ALAM, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there had been too much publicity on the dispute between the judiciary and the Bar Council.

Dr Mahathir said if such incidents were to occur in other countries, it would not get such publicity.

He said the local Press was championing the priorities of others and was eager to play up negative issues.

"For instance when our radar broke down, local and foreign newspapers played up the story. But when a similar incident occurred in another country, when its radar broke down for six hours, there was nothing reported here. Of course, there was also no report of it in the newspapers of the country concerned.

"If we were to look at court cases heard in the US,

in some instances we find that the judges do not pass good judgments ... but we do not care much.

"But if it were to happen in Malaysia, it will be blown out of proportion so much so that it becomes an issue."

On the dispute between the judiciary and the Bar Council, he said the views of both sides had to be considered as both were claiming to be correct.

Asked if any judges had voiced their unhappiness with Chief Justice of the Federal Court Tan Sri Eusoff Chin, he said nobody had indicated or written to him.

"I learn a lot of things from the newspapers, sometimes even before the thing has happened they (the newspapers) say it has happened and when I comment on it, it sometimes becomes a fact," he said after open-

ing the S.E.H. (Shah Alam) Sdn Bhd factory here.

He was asked to comment on the on-going dispute between the judiciary and the Bar Council.

The dispute is over the Ayer Molek case which became controversial after it went through Court of Appeal and Federal Court proceedings where comments and criticisms were made by judges at both courts.

Subsequently, the Bar Council issued a Press statement expressing its "deep shock" over the case and alleged that the Federal Court proceedings held in Ipoh were unconstitutional as one of the panel members was a High Court judge.

These comments prompted Eusoff to criticise the council for going to the Press instead of taking up the matter with the judiciary.