

05 AUG 1997

Mahathir-Soros

MAHATHIR STILL UNDECIDED ON MEETING WITH SOROS

LANGKAWI, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has not decided whether to meet American currency trader George Soros who has requested for a meeting with the Prime Minister.

"I don't know. I haven't decided", Dr Mahathir said when reporters asked his response to Soros' request.

Soros had sought the meeting after Dr Mahathir identified him as the rogue speculator who had manipulated Asean currencies to first discourage and later punish countries in the region for admitting Myanmar into Asean last month.

The prime minister, who earlier visited several development projects here, said it was not a question whether Soros was willing to see him but "whether I'm willing to see.."

Asked when he would decide to see Soros, Dr Mahathir jokingly told the reporter who posed the question: "I'll inform you..maybe I ask your permission".

In earlier reports, Dr Mahathir had said he was considering Soros's request and wanted to find out what Soros could contribute.

The prime minister also said he did not have any idea whether speculative attacks on several regional currencies, including the Ringgit, was still going on.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the party had not discussed extending the term of office of the Umno supreme council from the present three years.

"I don't know. That's just a public suggestion", he said commenting on suggestions that council members, including the president, be elected every five years.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, visited Galeria Perdana, the Langkawi International Shooting Range and book village project at Lubuk Semilang near here.

The book village, initiated by Sanusi, is scheduled to be opened to the public in October. -- Bernama

NH rn