

Observers get a lashing

54 11 98

PM: They're trying to pressure judge

By P. BALA KUMAR

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has lashed out at foreigners who want to be given observer status at the Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim trial, accusing them of wanting to apply undue pressure on the judge.

"These observers appear to be here not to watch the trial, they want to put the court and the judge on trial.

"I agree with the judge that they should not come here to oversee the judge ... as if they are so superior that they know better on how justice is administered that they must oversee our judges," the Prime Minister said.

Speaking to reporters after witnessing a signing ceremony at Airod, he said Malaysia was also doubtful of the standard of justice in the countries that had questioned the independence of Malaysia's judiciary.

In rejecting the appli-

cations for observer status on Monday, Justice Augustine Paul said the presence of foreign observers was an insult to the court and they were acting like a supervisor to ensure a just trial.

Dr Mahathir said: "In their countries, you will find that the administration of justice leaves very much to be desired.

"People are tried in the newspapers and media first and only then (the accused) will appear in the court by which time the judge and the juries will not have a private opinion."

He said foreign observers could still come to Malaysia and if they could find a seat in the courtroom they could go in and watch the trial.

"But they will not be given special status as observer," he said.

On Cuepacs' request for incentives in lieu of bonus, Dr Mahathir said he would discuss the matter with the union leaders when he met them.