

# Anwar 'approved purchase of jet'

By WAN HAMIDI HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the purchase of a new government executive jet, expected to arrive here next month, was approved three years ago by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim when he was the finance minister.

The Prime Minister said it was the Government's jet and not his and that he did not have that kind of money to buy such an aircraft.

"(The decision to buy the jet) was decided three years ago. It is not something new.

"It was decided at the time when he (Anwar) was the finance minister. He approved it," he said at a press conference after launching two new models of Proton cars at the National Sports Complex yesterday.

day. 5.13.11.98

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on Anwar's allegation that he (Dr Mahathir) had ordered an extravagant jet.

Anwar alleged in a statement read out by his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail earlier yesterday that Dr Mahathir had directed the finance ministry to place an order for a new and sophisticated executive jet called *Global Express*, allegedly costing RM200mil.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar should know better because he had been using jets, too, including the existing government executive jet.

"We are selling off what we have to get this new jet because the one we have does not have the range."

"He (Anwar) had been doing a lot of travelling

and he used to borrow other people's jets. We don't like borrowing other people's jet. We like to use our own," he said.

On the reported resignation of Alvin Toffler and Dr Kenichi Ohmae from the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) International Advisory Panel, Dr Mahathir said Dr Ohmae was still with the panel but he was not sure about Toffler.

"Ohmae thinks we are getting bad press because the reporting (on Anwar's issue) were slightly skewed. He thinks we should correct the bad image," he said.

He said Ohmae had recorded a one-hour interview with him to counter the bad press Malaysia had received and distributed it in Japan. He said Ohmae also did a recording and

would send it to other channels.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported in its latest issue that the two had resigned because they were unhappy with the Government's handling of the Anwar's issue.

Ohmae who was contacted by *The Star* for his comments on the report replied by facsimile:

"No facts about the report. I am still a member of the advisory committee."

Dr Mahathir said the resignation of panel members would not affect the MSC project.

On whether the Apec summit would be affected by Anwar's court case, Dr Mahathir said the court process was an unfortunate thing and admitted that it would be noticed by visitors.