

Mahathir: Country still needs ISA

SHAH ALAM: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad revealed that he wanted to abolish the ISA but was told by the security forces that the country was not ready for it.

"I thought Malaysia was peaceful and the people in this country were adults and matured enough not to resort to violence and demonstration.

"But it is now evident that there are quarters who want to create chaos.

"Then again in Britain recently, a suspected terrorist group was detained without any trial," he told reporters after opening the national level Unity Day celebrations here yesterday.

He said the ISA was a preventive law similar to

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laws used by developed nations to prevent terrorist attacks.

Dr Mahathir said the recent demonstrations and riots caused businesses to suffer losses.

"This is why the ISA must be maintained, to prevent people from creating chaos in the country without seeking justice in the courts.

"To make matters worst the foreign media highlight the riots every day as though people were rioting all the time," he said.

Asked if Malaysia was being lenient with the foreign media, Dr Mahathir said, they (the foreign media) were very powerful.

"It is a time when might is right, when you have

the power to bash people, you bash people.

"The foreign press lies like in the case of President Bill Clinton ... they show Clinton holding Monica Lewinsky a million times in a million places.

On reports that the US ambassador to Malaysia John Mallot had met with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Dr Mahathir said the envoy was free to do so.

"We have no restriction on the visit but don't tell lies," he said.

To a question whether Nato forces would attack Serbia over the Kosovo crisis, Dr Mahathir said he did not think Nato would launch an attack.

"It does not involve

their people so they will not bother and their statements will remain statements.

"Just like in the case when I asked them to curb currency speculators, they did not bother. Now after being hit by the speculators they want to act," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is leaving for Japan on a five-day visit, said there was no need for anyone to relieve him.

"I will be only five to six hours away and if there are things to be done the two Deputy Home Ministers are there and the second Finance Minister is around.

"Those who want to make a coup attempt can try while I am away," said Dr Mahathir.