

Dr M: Umno will pick successor ³⁴

BANGI: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Umno will decide on his successor should anything happen to him.

"The party will decide. We have vice-presidents. They will decide who the successor should be if I popped," he said in response to a question on his decision not to appoint a deputy prime minister.

On the possibility that this may create problems as there were three vice-presidents, he said: "There will be some prob-

lems at first but I'm quite sure in the end they'll decide (to choose) one of them. In the tradition of Umno, we close ranks after deciding."

Asked if he would appoint an acting deputy prime minister, he replied: "There's no point. If you appoint one, it will be difficult to dis-appoint."

On the recent foreign exchange control measures, he said the effects had been "very good" so far.

"Obviously, the people have regained confidence. Business

activities have increased. Loans are now available for business people.

"I think the economy is picking up and I hope it will continue."

Dr Mahathir also took the foreign press to task for their negative reporting about Malaysia.

He said they had refused to publish facts that the share market was doing well after the credit control measures were introduced.

"You (the foreign press) will

say that 'although it looks good, it is actually not good'," he added.

He said the foreign press thought highly of the policies of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim "because he seemed to conform to what you want him to do."

He also said that Malaysia would continue to act independently "whether you like it or not."

The foreign press, he said, was controlled by the people

running it.

"They have never said one good word about Malaysia," he said.

News about the country's peace and that the people had not revolted was not reported, he added.

On the unfavourable response of the International Monetary Fund towards Malaysia's credit control measures, Dr Mahathir said: "We'll see whether they (the measures) will fail or not. They will wish that they (the mea-

asures) will fail.

"They will do everything to make sure that we fail. Right now, a lot of people are cracking their heads to find out how they can frustrate Malaysia."

Asked if the Government would lift loan restrictions on share buying, the Prime Minister said the Government would be watching the stock market's performance.

"If it goes up, then there's no necessity but if it's sluggish, we'll make more money available for the banks."