

# Foreign media 47 spreading lies, 5.25.98 says Dr M

KUALA LLJMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday slammed the foreign media for spreading lies about the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to influence the world to act against Malaysia.

The Prime Minister was responding to questions by a CNBC journalist at a press conference who said the cable TV station would telecast a videotape of Anwar making accusations against him.

The journalist said Anwar had accused the Prime Minister of being hungry for power and money and that he remained in power mainly for the interest of his family and cronies.

In a sarcastic tone, Dr Mahathir said: "Of course I'm remaining in power because of my family and my cronies and you are free to air this every half an hour because you own the media and you can tell lies to the whole world and influence the whole world against us.

"We are powerless to do anything against you. So that is the right of the media.

"What rights I have, of course, are of no interest to you but you can tell lies. Go on, I don't care. If you want to believe that, you are welcome to believe that."

Asked whether the Government would take action against CNBC if Anwar's allegations were false, the Prime Minister said that since foreigners believed freedom of speech included freedom to tell lies, the Government would accept such lies.

CNBC Asia is the Singapore-based affiliate of the NBC network of the United States.

The videotape, which CNBC Asia said was provided by Anwar's family and recorded hours before his arrest on Sunday night, was first broadcast at 6.30pm and repeated later.

Anwar is seen speaking into the camera with his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail seated beside him. He spoke in Bahasa Malaysia and an English translation voice-over was provided.

In the tape, Anwar addressed his children, saying all the accusations against him were vicious lies.

He said his former colleagues in Government were not *confident* "that I could be trusted to agree to their ways of monopolising wealth through fraud and violence, of attaining wealth in the interest of a number of groups."

"That is why they have launched this plot that is truly evil towards me," said Anwar who was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2 and expelled from Umno the next day.

Anwar also made accusations that there was misappropriation of Umno

● **TURN TO PAGE FOUR**

## PM: Foreign media want to see violence in Malaysia

● **FROM PAGE ONE**

funds and that he had informed Dr Mahathir but the Prime Minister kept the information to himself.

Anwar said Dr Mahathir had become angry when he did not support development of the KL International Airport because "there was too much interest (in it) for his family."

He said he would not have opposed the Bakun dam project if it had been done "the correct way."

He also did not approve of the facilities at Putrajaya, especially the Prime Minister's house.

At the press conference when another foreign journalist asked why there was a ban on public rallies to discuss political reform in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said the ban on public rallies was not something new and that there had always been a ban in this country (since 1978).

"When Anwar held rallies in his house and elsewhere, he was breaking the law. The police were completely in their right

to stop him but the police allowed him to do so.

"But of course the foreign media will never notice it because when the police are lenient, you don't notice. You are hoping to see the police act violently, so that you can say that these natives don't know how to run their country, you should hand back to the colonial masters so that they run the country better.

"That's the attitude you have, you can't imagine that we can run our country properly and democratically. It is a democratic country but we have a **problem** here because people of different races might fight each other if we allow for that kind of rally, which is meant to incite violence," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that the foreign media would like to see violence in Malaysia because they expected Malaysians to do that because, to the foreigners, the people did not know anything about running a country.

"So we would like to hand over the running of this country to journalists

from your country, so you would do a better job than us," he said.

On Australian Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer's statement that the Apec summit be moved from Kuala Lumpur because of the recent events in the city, the Prime Minister said if all the Apec members agreed, he had no way of stopping them.

However, he said if only one deputy prime minister suggested it, he could stay away on his own.

"It is his (Fischer) right to suggest that Apec be moved, just as they suggested that the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games should be held in Australia because we had haze here.

"Rut others were willing to come and this Sukom was the best attended Commonwealth Games in the whole history of the Games," he said.

Asked why the foreign media had not been highlighting the positive things about Malaysia, the Prime Minister said it was part of the rights of the media, which must not highlight good things.