

# Accept African leadership, PM tells West

By JACQUELINE ANN SURIN

SEPANG: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reminded the West that southern African leaders today are no longer dictators interested only in amassing wealth for themselves.

The Prime Minister said these leaders were now more interested in developing their countries and improving the lives of their people.

"Western governments have chosen not to acknowledge the change in attitude among the new southern African leadership.

"They are more interested in the problems in one or two southern African countries than in acknowledging the new leaderships in that region," he told reporters yesterday upon his arrival at the KL International Airport after a week-long working visit to South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique.

Unfortunately, Dr Mahathir said, developed countries took no notice of this "new generation" of leaders.

"Instead they continue to focus on

problems in Angola, Sierra Leone and Somalia," he said.

He said that Western countries had the tendency to make it seem as though a problem was plaguing all of Africa even if it only affected one or two African countries.

"The Western countries don't want to help developing countries in Africa at all. They only know how to focus on the bad things there. They don't care if they create misery for millions of people.

"They are more concerned about transparency and the free flow of capital across borders which only benefit them. They are not concerned with people's welfare or social problems."

He said rich Western countries did not mind destroying developing countries just to make money.

To a question, he said African countries were not that badly affected by the currency attacks because they were not major trading nations.

However, he said, the attack on the South African rand had made the country poorer and forced its neighbours to also devalue their currencies.