

Visits are for briefing people, says PM



8 14/8/98
PETALING JAYA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad explained that his visits throughout the country were to explain the current economic problems directly to the people.

The Prime Minister said foreigners, however, liked to think that there would be a general election soon.

He said some people thought they were not affected by the economic slowdown, including those who were in the rubber, oil palm, and cocoa industries.

He said this was because the prices of the export crops had increased due to the depreciation of the ringgit.

"As for whether there is going to be an election or not, in this case, there will be an election in Sabah tomorrow as I'm going to Sabah tomorrow," he said, responding to a foreign media reporter's question on whether his visits to some states were to prepare for the general election which was not due until the year 2000.

On his meeting with author Alvin Toffler, the Prime Minister said they agreed that there was a need to shift the current thinking on policies.

"The old philosophy stated that governments can afford to take time to make decisions but with the situation where information can suddenly be with us, we must act fast," he said.

On the statement of loyalty pledged by Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Penang recently, Dr Ma-

hathir said there was no need for him to say anything more.

Asked about some Umno members who were stilt in doubt with such a pledge, the Prime Minister said.

"That's the trouble with the people and the press. When we say white, they say it's black. When we say black, they say white."

As he was about to leave the press conference, Dr Mahathir said: "Sorry for hitting out at the press again."