

No crackdown on local media, says Dr M

BANGI: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there is no crackdown against the local media, as alleged by the foreign media following the resignation of Utusan Melayu Group editor-in-chief Datuk Johan Jaafar.

The Prime Minister said no political pressure was exerted on Johan, who resigned last Tuesday.

"When he came, there was talk that it was political pres-

sure. Now he leaves.

"We all come and go sometimes," he said, referring to Johan's appointment in 1992 following Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin's resignation.

Dr Mahathir, who was speaking to reporters after opening Utusan's printing plant complex Sri Utusan here yesterday, said reports in the foreign media did not matter.

On the foreign media quoting Umno members regarding

the alleged clampdown against the local press, he said:

"Maybe there are the Umno members who are frustrated because they were not entertained by the press."

On whether the local media's attitude was worse than ever before, he said:

"It looks like that tendency. In the early days when Utusan was brought to Malaysia, they were nationalistic, they supported our struggle, supported

the Government.

"Now, it seems that if we say something positive about the Government, it is as if we are committing a crime. So to be credible, you must constantly condemn the Government and condemn the country."

Utusan Melayu (M) Bhd chairman Tan Sri Kamarul Ariffin said the Utusan board would meet on Tuesday to discuss Johan's resignation and his replacement.