

SUN - 3 AUG 2001

Meeting with Bush should not have conditions attached: PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he did not ask to meet US President George W. Bush and was not aware of the conditions for such a meeting.

"I am not aware of these things. We did not make a request for a meeting," the prime minister said when asked about the conditions imposed by the US government for them to meet on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting in Shanghai in October.

"If we have the time we will meet, if we don't have the time, we won't meet and that has always been the practice.

"I am not rejecting the

whole thing and I am not saying that I don't want to meet."

Asked about the conditions imposed, he said he is not aware of them, adding: "I don't think we should have conditions, if you want to talk, just talk."

The Far Eastern Economic Review magazine reported last month that US officials would like to see an improvement in three areas before Mahathir can meet Bush.

One concerns the treatment of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his desire to seek treatment overseas.

The others are the detention of six Keadilan leaders under the ISA and delays in the distribution of the *Review* and *Asiaweek*.