

Dr M prefers to ignore accusers

By A. LETCHUMANAN

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says he does not care if people accuse him of being a dictator who practises cronyism because he knows that he is not.

"I do what I think I should do and I am satisfied with the results.

"I don't care if people say I am a dictator because I know I am not.

"If they say I practise cronyism, I know I don't.

"I know what they say about me is not true, but I cannot make them believe otherwise," he said in an interview published in the latest edition of *Asiaweek* magazine.

Dr Mahathir was asked if he was saddened that people who had ad-

mired him in the past say that he was ending his career on a low note.

He also answered questions dealing with criticisms against his administration, its handling of the Anwar Ibrahim saga, corporate governance and race relations.

Dr Mahathir said in the life of any politician, there will be people who want to tell everyone this is the greatest guy in the world, and there will be people who want to kill him.

"In Umno meetings, they keep on saying, the beloved Prime Minister, *etcetera etcetera*.

"I said, please don't praise me. I know one day you are going to hate me.

"What is important is what we do

together, and we have done it.

"If you make a comparison between what is done in this country and what is done in other developing countries, you will have a fair idea whether there has been success or not," he said.

On Chinese groups demanding meritocracy, Dr Mahathir said some were extremists but the vast majority of the community were very tolerant and understand the reasons behind the policy of positive discrimination.

On claims that Umno is elitist and moneyed, Dr Mahathir said he had asked Umno to behave.

"Over the years, because of the success of the country, these people have become materialistic.

"I admit that it is a very tough

battle to fight," he said.

He added that the mentality among the grassroots to make money was wrong.

Dr Mahathir said that he had frustrations with Umno which has become weak as there was no dedication.

"The purpose of getting into Umno is not to become ministers and make money.

"The purpose is to serve," he said.

The Prime Minister said people were still investing in Malaysia because they liked the stability and our currency management.

"It is not Malaysia's internal policy or aggressive foreign policy which is affecting investment.

"The investments have been go-

ing to Europe, America but little is coming to this region. The Japanese economy is in bad shape and they are not investing either," he said.

Dr Mahathir had the harshest word for his former deputy (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim) who was the main reason for Umno's flagging support among the Malays.

"This man who was brought up by me, pushed up until he became deputy, was all along working for himself. All along he was plotting. I underestimated his capacity for creating trouble," he said.

He added that Anwar built up "cells" in every organisation, in the police, armed forces, civil service, among students and university lecturers.