

Rape claim: Manila should apologise, says Dr M

Not 16 OCT 2002

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The Philippines should apologise to Malaysia for claiming that a teenager allegedly raped while at an Immigration detention centre in Sabah was a Filipino, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Asked by reporters after launching the International Nuclear Conference 2002 whether the Philippines should say sorry, the Prime Minister said:

“I think they should (apologise) because they jumped to conclusions that we rape their people.

“You should be more sensitive and cautious when making statements that could lead to the souring of relations between countries.”

He said the Philippines could have informed Malaysia (of the alleged rape) instead of “making a big noise about it, getting it into the papers and all that.”

“If there is a case, report to us and we will investigate.”

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar had said yesterday that the Philippines should apologise over

the issue.

The police had confirmed that the girl, whom the Philippines had earlier said was its national, was, in fact, a Malaysian.

Dr Mahathir said the girl was found wandering without any address.

“But even if there is a rape case, let’s find out first whether a rape has been committed before jumping to conclusions. This girl, I understand, is one of the street children.”