

09/10/2003

Journalists in stitches over PM's comments on Arnie's win

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's comments on Hollywood superstar Arnold Schwarzenegger who won the Californian gubernatorial race had the media in stitches.

When asked by a foreign journalist about Schwarzenegger's victory, Dr Mahathir said he was a deserving candidate although he may have been mischievous during his younger days.

"Sometimes people behave badly in the past. People do not grow up thinking that 'I am going to be the Governor and therefore I must deny myself all the pleasures of life'," he said as reporters attending Dr Mahathir's Press conference at the end of the Ninth Asean Summit, broke into laughter.

He added that anyone who stood for elections, including the members of the Press, risk having skeletons in their cupboards exposed during the campaign.

To a question from a Philippines reporter whether he had a hand in President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's decision to run for presidency in the forthcoming election, Dr Mahathir said he had nothing to do with it.

Asked whether Arroyo's decision would be better for Asean, he said "maybe it would".

He also said Malaysia needs to work closely with neighbouring countries to tighten security in order to prevent a recurrence of kidnappings like the one in Sabah on Monday.

"It merely indicates that we need to tighten our security," and added that many people outside the region did not know how big Southeast Asia was. They thought that if something bad happened in one spot in Southeast Asia, the whole region would become an unsafe place, he said.