

# Media control OK to ensure stability: Dr M

**PUTRAJAYA:** Controlling the media is permissible in the interest of national stability, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

However, he said, it would be wrong if the media were prevented from publishing "other people's views".

"Providing the right information to the people is important in many ways including allowing them to choose the right government. But the media must be responsible in what it does," he said after presenting a speech at the sixth

Perdana Discourse Series entitled *Media and National Development* at the Perdana Leadership Foundation.

In 1987, when Mahathir was prime minister, he used the Printing Presses and Publications Act to shut down several newspapers which were critical of his leadership.

The Act, which gives the government absolute powers to grant or revoke publishing licenses without judicial review, remains in place and continues to keep the press in check.

*The Sun*  
Mahathir claimed yesterday the Malay, Chinese and Tamil press are freer than the English press in Malaysia.

On his erroneous statement on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi having bought a house in Perth, he said: "I made the statement based on rumours. You know when you are carried away giving a speech like that, you don't censor yourself or are not too careful in what you say."

Mahathir apologised for his statement, saying: "I'm sorry I said something

that was wrong. I stand corrected."

He also apologised for making disparaging remarks about the name of former *New Straits Times* group editor-in-chief Datuk Kalimullah Hassan, saying: "I apologise for that because I heard his daughter cried after hearing it."

Mahathir also predicted that if his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, made a political comeback in the next general election, he would still be unable to take over government or become prime minister.