I'll table
the
Budget
next year, says Dr M

BARRING any unforeseen cir-
cumstances, Datuk Seri Dr
Mahathir Mohamad will table
the 2004 Budget next year.

"I will still table the budget
next year, unless I fall sick or
something because I am sup-
poused to retire only after
October," the Prime Minister
told reporters when asked
whether this year's Budget
would be his last.

"In fact, I believe next
year's budget will be present-
ed earlier than this year's
because of the fasting month."

However, he declined to say
whether he had any plans to
appoint a new finance minister
prior to his retirement.

On the hefty allocation for
education, he said it was an
investment for the future gen-
eration.

"We want to concentrate on
the development of our youn-
ger generation and that is why
RM14bil was allocated for pri-
mary and secondary education
and only RM8bil for tertiary
education," the Finance Min-
ister added.

He said the huge allocation
for preparations for the teach-
ing of Mathematics and
Science in English was because
the educational tools needed to
ensure the success of the plan
were expensive.

Citing an example, he said
the projectors needed would
cost RM13,000 each.

Asked whether this meant
that the Government would go
ahead with the plan to start
from the primary level begin-
nig next year despite reser-
vations expressed by the
Chinese-based parties within
the Barisan Nasional, he said.

"We need to provide for the
infrastructure so that we are
prepared. As to whether it will
start from Year One, or Year
Four or even Year Six is anot-
her matter, but we still have to
prepare early."

Asked whether the rate of
foreign direct investment
would drop because the cor-
porate tax was still maintained at
28%, Dr Mahathir said the tax
had little bearing on the FDI in
the country.