

# DR M: NO DEADLINE FOR MCA

By MARIA SAMAD.

**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed the hope today that the nine-month-old MCA crisis would be resolved soon.**

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman and Umno president, stressed, however, that he had not set any "time-frame" for the MCA to resolve the crisis.

"But I would have liked it to be resolved long ago. In fact, I would have liked it if there was no problem at all.

"All I can say now is that the MCA has good leaders inside and outside and I am sure the problem will be resolved soon,"

he told reporters at Subang airport on his return from his 10-day visit to Mali, Libya, Egypt and Tunisia. Also present to welcome him home was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam.

On whether the Barisan Supreme Council would meet to discuss the MCA crisis, Dr Mahathir said: "This is the \$64 question. We try to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of component parties. I can't speak for the Barisan."

Dr Mahathir was also repeatedly pressed to comment on Datuk Musa's statement last Saturday that there was a growing feeling among the Umno leadership that the MCA should opt out of the Barisan and rejoin the coalition after solving its internal feud.

The Prime Minister replied: "I have to discuss the matter with Datuk Musa first."

STAR 21 DEC 1984

"I have to find out from Datuk Musa what happened while I was away. We haven't discussed the matter yet. I want to get it from the horse's mouth.

"I've only read Press reports on this. And newspaper reports are usually slanted in order to create news depending on what the papers want to achieve.

"One particular newspaper, in fact, is fond of reading between the lines and giving greater meaning than what was actually meant."

He went on to say that he did not know whether it was a call (by Datuk Musa). "It could be a feeling of some people. I must clear this with Datuk Musa before making any comment.

"He may have had some impressions about the feelings and I may not have the same impressions."

Pressed again on the matter, he replied: "Under the circumstances that I

am in how can I make a decision? What I know is what the Press said. Give me a chance to speak to Datuk Musa."

Asked whether the Umno political bureau, which he chairs, had made a decision on the "opt out" statement at its last meeting, he replied: "There was no official decision by Umno."

"There was some cakap-cakap because the matter (the MCA crisis) does interest Umno since we are in the Barisan. But there was no special meeting of Umno to discuss this."

Asked about Umno grassroots leaders coming out in support of Datuk Musa's statement, he replied: "It is normal for them to react to newspaper reports."

Dr Mahathir stressed that he had to find out what happened first "then I have to think what I have to do. I can't

PM: I must abide by consensus

● FROM PAGE ONE

reveal all my plans to you."

"I must know what actually happened, sieve the facts and decide whether mediation is the answer or come up with a statement (on the MCA crisis).

"I must also abide by the consensus of Umno if it affects the party. If it affects the MCA, then I will have to talk to the party."

"As for a Barisan Supreme Council meeting, how can I call one now when most of the people (Barisan leaders) are out of the country?"

On whether Datuk Musa's statement had "tarnished" the Barisan's image, Dr Mahathir said: "Our image goes up and down, this is inevitable."

● TURN TO PAGE 3