

PM WARNS OF THE 'SPITEFUL' ONES

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By AZMI M. ANSHAR

TANAH MERAH, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned of a group of Malays out to split the Chinese and Malays in the country.

He said today that this group was circulating "spiteful" letters purportedly written by a group of Chinese and aimed at the Malays.

The Prime Minister and Umno president suspected that certain Umno members, after receiving the original copy, duplicated it and circulated it in the party.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, asked: "If it was the Chinese who wrote these letters in secret, as is made out to be the case, how did copies get into the hands of the Malays unless they were the one who started it first?"

Dr Mahathir was commenting on reports that there were letters circulated by the Chinese to Malaysian Chinese studying overseas urging them to "open their eyes to the achievements of the Malays."

He said that he himself had received "such a letter" but could not confirm whether it was the same as that referred

to by reporters.

Dr Mahathir believed that the letter was written by a certain group of Malays to instigate other Malays into hating the Chinese.

"The Government will ban such letters if they are found to be offensive or have serious security implications. On the other hand, we will ignore it if the people choose to do the same," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that he did not think that the letters were written by subversive elements but by those who were envious of, and dissatisfied with, the Barisan Government.

He added that the intention behind the letter was to swing Chinese and Malay support away from the Barisan.

"These envious people want to see Umno and MCA lose in the elections.

"Many Umno members also got hold of these letters and they have complained to me.

"Obviously, such letters couldn't have been written by the Chinese in secret if practically everyone had read them," he pointed out.

And he added: "The matter is rather complicated because we are dealing with complicated people."