

Stop court battles, Barisan parties told

# Best solved from within

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**MALACCA, Sat. —** Barisan Nasional component partners should undertake a joint study of their respective constitutions with a view to making amendments to prevent party disputes from being taken to the courts, the Prime Minister suggested here today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there was an urgent need to put a stop to this practice of taking party conflicts to court, a problem that was common to many Barisan Nasional components, and stressed that such problems should be settled within the party.

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tive constitutions to overcome this situation," added Dr Mahathir, who is also chairman of the Barisan Nasional.

Declaring open the 33rd general assembly of the MIC at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel here, the Prime Minister, however, stressed that in the event of any criminal wrong-doing by a party member, the law would have to take its course.

Dr Mahathir, who was given a traditional Indian welcome, complete with *Nadaswaram* music, on arrival at the hotel accompanied by Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Thambi Chik, explained why he felt for amendments to the parties constitutions.

"The aim is, firstly, to prevent party matters from going to

"We should strive for political solutions to settle problems within the party. In this manner, we can ensure that when there is a conflict, it is kept within the party and not exposed to the public and become a topic for discussion in coffee shops," he added.

One way of doing this, he said, was for Barisan Nasional parties to amend their constitutions to prevent members from going to the courts.

"Umno is taking steps to do this. If other component parties are doing the same, then all of them can jointly study the best way to make provisions in their respec-

court, a frequent problem which we all face.

"Many components of the Barisan Nasional have faced this problem and surely we do not want to hear our component parties and their leaders being smeared outside the political arena," he said.

"When this happens, not only will the party members be confused but the people at large and voters will also lose faith in the Barisan Nasional," the Prime Minister pointed out.

However, Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, cautioned that in amending the constitutions it was important to make sure that sufficient avenues

were provided in it for party members to seek redress for their grievances.

Care should also be exercised to see that as a result of amending the constitution the parties did not become "rigid" organisations where their leaders could not be criticised at all, he said.

"What is important is for all grievances to be settled within the party in the true party spirit, in a spirit of co-operation and in the interest of the community and the nation," the Prime Minister pointed out.

"I hope we can overcome this problem of going to court as soon as possible."