

PM raps critics of hangings

NST - 9 JUL 1988 'NOT RIGHT TO LABEL US BARBARIC'

KOTA KINABALU, Tues. — The Prime Minister today hit out at Western and other foreign critics who have labelled Malaysia as "barbaric" for hanging convicted Australian drug traffickers Kevin Barlow and Brian Chambers yesterday.

He criticised them for using the word and said it should not have been used to describe Malaysia as "we have never had any lynchings and things like that which only barbarians like to do".

Hanging as a form of executing criminals after all originated in the West, he said.

Commenting on a statement by Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke who had described the hangings as "barbaric", Dr Mahathir said: "That is his opinion. I am not interested."

The Prime Minister was responding to questions at a Press conference held after he chaired a

meeting of the Sabah Barisan Nasional.

On arguments that humans had no right to take the life of fellow humans, he said: "Tell that to the drug pedlars first... they are also taking lives by distributing dadah."

The legal process had been completed, he said, when responding to another question.

Pardons Board

"What has been done has actually gone far beyond the legal process. The process says it must be considered by the Pardons Board. The board has been the same one considering death sentences all this while. And nobody has complained about that.

"But because it happened to their own citizens, and probably because of their colour also, Canberra suddenly became sensitive about the death sentence.

"According to them, they are against the death sentence. They

should then be protesting against death sentences everywhere."

He remembered a Commonwealth conference where African countries protested against the decision by South Africa to hang a black. Only African countries brought the matter up at the conference and "we lent support".

The next day the man was hanged.

"I don't accept all this accusation of being barbaric or otherwise. We learned all this from them (Westerners).

"We used to execute by stabbing with daggers just above the clavicle."

On reports that some Malaysian students in Australia were receiving threats, he said: "There is nothing we can do except to ask the Australian Government to look after them.

"Just as we would act against Malaysians who try to harm Australians here, so we expect the Australian Government to protect Malaysians there," he said.