

PM to announce proposals to defuse certain problems

SOLUTIONS TO ISSUES

318 FEB 1986

By KALIMULLAH HASSAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to announce, over the next two months, solutions to several long-standing issues facing the country.

Barisan Nasional sources said Dr Mahathir is also expected to suggest a solution to the 10-month Sabah constitutional crisis.

The other matters are on the Bukit China issue, the controversies over Section 2 (21) of the 1961 Education

Act, permits for lion dances and the BMF loans scandal.

The sources said Dr Mahathir will visit Sabah on April 4 and 5 — his first visit to the State since the Parti Bersatu Sabah won the April State elections defeating Berjaya, a component party of the Barisan Nasional.

The sources said that Dr Mahathir, after consulting leaders of other Barisan component parties, might announce acceptance of the PBS and Usno into the coalition.

The PBS, which holds 28 seats and Usno 17 in the 48-member State Assembly, have both applied to join the Barisan. However, the coalition has not made a decision on their applications yet.

The sources said several component parties were in favour of accepting the

PBS into the coalition.

Berjaya, which has three seats, had initially said that it would object to the PBS application but support Usno. However, last month, Berjaya president Datuk Muhammad Noor Mansor said the party would abide by Dr Mahathir's decision.

The sources said the Government would also decide favourably on several proposals put up by the MCA on issues facing the Chinese community.

The MCA has submitted proposals to repeal Section 21 (2) of the Education Act which empowers the Education Minister to convert a Chinese primary school into a national primary school.

This section of the Act has been a sore point with Chinese educationists. The sources said the Government had not used this section of the Act before, and

therefore, felt that it should be repealed to allay fears among the Chinese.

The MCA has also submitted suggestions which it feels will resolve two other main matters — the issuing of permits for lion dances and the Bukit China quit rent issue.

MCA sources said that indications are the Government was agreeable to the proposals and Dr Mahathir is expected to make the announcement at an MCA rally on March 2.

The Malacca Government had imposed a \$2 million quit rent on the trustees of Bukit China and they face forfeiture of the hill if they failed to pay up. However, the trustees said they had been exempted from paying the quit rent.

● TURN TO PAGE 2