

# Squabbles won't scare away investors: Dr M

NST 16 SEP 1987

PENANG, Tues. — The Prime Minister today dismissed suggestions that verbal skirmishes among Umno leaders and bickering between component parties of the Barisan Nasional are destabilising the country and scaring away investors.

While the stock market was sensitive to it, serious investors were not easily influenced. Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad added.

Dr Mahathir said foreign investors did their own detailed and in-depth investigation of the country and after deciding to invest they would not change their mind easily.

He quoted the case of Sony Corporation which decided to invest in an audio accessory plant in Penang despite "all sorts of rumours".

"The situation in the Barisan Nasional is a phenomenon that will blow over," he said at a Press conference before leaving Penang after a three-day visit.

Responding to a question, he said he had appealed to component parties in the Barisan Nasional to stop airing their grievances in the Press.

He said during his tour of the

States — he has yet to visit Perlis, Perak, Selangor, the Federal Territory, Negeri Sembilan, Sabah and Sarawak — he also held meetings with leaders of the component parties.

## Solve problems

In his meetings he reminded them of their success in overcoming problems through negotiations and behind-the-door discussions in the past and saw no reason why they could not continue to solve problems between them in a similar manner.

The Barisan Nasional chairman said that leaders of component parties he had met with agreed with him.

But if the Government gave in to demands such as the call to review the Federal Constitution, it could cause instability and frighten away investors.

Throwing the matter open would result in debate that could lead to tension between the races in the country.

"Everyone will want all sorts of

things. Many extreme demands might be made resulting in counter-demands. At that point even the Government would not be able to stop the debates anymore after agreeing to the review," he said.

"We don't think the majority feels there is a need for a review. Unless, of course, we say that in a democracy the minority voice be allowed to prevail."

As that was not possible "a minority must remain a minority".

Those in the minority could voice their thoughts "within limits".

## Insignificant

But if people did not want to accept their thoughts that should be the end of it.

But then these people would try anything to get their thoughts accepted. They used public interest or pressure groups, organised demonstrations or other means to influence the majority with their opinions.

"I cannot curb this trend because the newspapers keep giving publi-

city to these insignificant people — so insignificant that they dare not seek the support of the majority in the country through elections."

"There is no need to give them publicity. They represent nobody except themselves. There are only about two or three hundred of them but they aim to move mountains."

On whether he wanted the Press to ignore them, he said: "I am not saying this. Of course, you are free to write what you like."

"It would have remained a small matter had talks by two or three people not been blown up.

"It's not fair to others."

He said the majority was not oppressing those in the minority. At the same time "we cannot allow the minority to oppress the majority."

Dr Mahathir suggested that those who wanted to have anything in the Constitution amended could go through the Barisan Nasional. It had the power to do so as it had the necessary two-third majority in Parliament.

"That is, if we agree to the amendments to be made," he added.