

PM: Ghafar to head team to meet Rulers

# No amendments to Seditious Act

EST 22 DEC 1990

From Fauzi Omar

**LONDON, Fri. — The Government will not amend the Seditious Act to allow a more open discussion of matters relating to the Rulers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.**

"There is no need to amend the Act because it is all right to criticise the monarchy as long as you do not advocate its abolishment."

Speaking to Malaysian newsmen here before leaving for home after a seven-day unofficial visit to Britain, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president said, the party did not want to abolish the constitutional monarchy.

"It's a good system. We want to keep it. All we want is that the monarchy should not do things they are not supposed to."

"If they continue to involve themselves in politics, they will themselves destroy constitutional monarchy."

The Prime Minister had said early this month that the Government would consider the suggestion by delegates at

the Umno general assembly to amend the Act.

Delegates had wanted the amendment to allow them to raise matters relating to the Rulers following allegations that some members of the royalty were involved in politics.

They had said that they were restricted by Section 3(1) (a) of the Act in discussing the issue.

The Section reads: *A seditious tendency is a tendency to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against any Ruler or against any Government.*

## Gulf crisis

He also said Umno deputy president Encik Ghafar Baba would meet the Rulers to brief them on the debate and resolution adopted at the general assembly on the constitutional monarchy.

Encik Ghafar is the chairman of the committee set up by the Umno supreme council early this month to study the proposals made by delegates.

Asked what Encik Ghafar would brief the Rulers on, he said: "The purpose of the resolution taken at the Umno general assembly was two-fold.

"Firstly, we want to tell the royalty

they are not beyond criticism.

"Secondly, Umno will keep on criticising the royalty each time they go out of line."

No deadline had been set for Encik Ghafar and his committee to meet the Rulers.

He also met Prime Minister John Major to discuss bilateral and international issues including the Gulf crisis, the democratisation of Eastern Europe and latest political developments in the Soviet Union.

Mr Major asked for his assessment of the situation in China and India.

He also met former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Dr Mahathir had a meeting with Mitsubishi president N. Nakamura to discuss collaboration between the Japanese industrial conglomerate and Hicom.

On the Commonwealth appraisal team summit which he will chair in London, Dr Mahathir said it would go on as scheduled on Jan 21 and 22.

"This is despite the current problems in the Middle East."

One of the proposals Malaysia would put forward is to have a majority decision on any issue instead of the present consensus.