

Dr M on poison pen letters

1 NOV 1992

By Jeffrey Ramayah and Syed Nadzri

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Umno members will not be easily influenced by poison pen letters which discredit and condemn party leaders, Umno president **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

He said he was aware that such letters were being circulated to all Umno divisions throughout the country.

"We want to take action against the originators of these letters but we must find out who they are," he told reporters after a two-hour meeting with 1,200 party division leaders here.

The Prime Minister said the people behind this mali-

cious move could be from within the party or even those outside Umno who want to destroy the party and disunite the Malays.

"Umno members cannot be influenced by the work of irresponsible people as they know their leaders and their capabilities and what is important is that we should not allow ourselves to be disunited."

He said the contents of the poison pen letters included suggestions on who should be elected as leaders and who should be dropped during party elections scheduled for next year.

Dr Mahathir said he did not know whether the police were tracing the source of these letters.

"We must first determine whether the distributors of

the poison pen letters are committing a criminal offence.

"If it is a crime, then the police can take appropriate action," he said.

He also urged Umno members not to elect people who resort to dubious means to seek positions in the party.

On the meeting with Umno divisional leaders, Dr Mahathir said this was a tradition conducted before every Umno general assembly.

The Umno general assembly will be held for four days from Thursday.

Dr Mahathir said the meeting gave members the opportunity to raise issues or problems that should not be brought up at the general assembly.

"Sometimes certain is-

ues will tarnish the image of the party and its struggles."

He said the meeting was carried out in a family atmosphere.

He said this was the first time that delegates from Sabah would be attending the general assembly and they had been briefed on the format of the proceedings.

On the delineation of electoral constituencies by the Election Commission which will lead to the creation of 12 new Umno divisions, Dr Mahathir said the party's supreme council would not interfere in the election of leaders for these divisions.

"But if there is a split (in the fight for positions), then the supreme council would have no choice but to step in," he added.