

MEETING ONLY FOR THE RULERS

KUALA LUMPUR: Rulers meeting here today to decide their stand on proposed Constitution amendments have shut out the Prime Minister and Mentris Besar — a move which casts doubts on the conference's status.

But regardless of their decision, Datuk Seri ~~Dr. Mahathir Mohamad~~ reiterated yesterday the Government would go ahead and table the Constitution Amendment Bill in the Dewan Rakyat on Monday.

"This is the wish of the people, it is very clear. Everywhere you go, you hear about the

dissatisfaction on the freedom given to Rulers to beat up and victimise the people or commit civil offences," the Prime Minister added.

Dr Mahathir said the meeting was originally scheduled as a special 159th meeting of the Conference of Rulers but on Thursday, he was informed it was strictly a "Rulers only" meeting.

It was not the Government's decision that he and the Mentris Besar should stay away from the meeting, he told reporters after bidding *sayonara* to his Japanese counterpart Kiichi Miyazawa (*see Page 3*).

Dr Mahathir said today's meeting was unlike the normal *Conference of Rulers* as it would be among only Rulers. In view of this, he was not sure whether it could be regarded as a *Conference of Rulers*.

Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar, speaking in Muar, said all official Rulers Conferences called to discuss national issues were required under the law to have full representation of the Executives (*see Page 2*).

There were clear provisions in the Constitution stipulating the Prime Minister, as adviser to the King, and Mentris Besar, as advisers to the Sultans, must be present in con-

ferences held over issues involving administration of the country.

Commenting on the Sultan of Kelantan's rejection of the Bill, Dr Mahathir said he had more or less expected such a decision.

To another question, he said some Sultans agreed fully to the proposed amendments but they were pressured into opposing the Government's move by their brother Rulers who were against it.

On the possibility of a few more Sultans objecting to the Bill, Dr Mahathir admitted they might do so.