

PM, MIBs told

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Prime Minister and the Menteri Besar have been informed not to attend tomorrow's Rulers' Conference where they are expected to make a decision on the constitutional amendments pertaining to their immunity.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he was informed of the decision yesterday. The Menteri Besar were informed verbally and in writing yesterday.

It is understood that the Prime Minister and the Menteri Besar were informed that Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah will not attend the meeting.

No reasons were given why they were not invited to the conference to be held at Istana Negara.

The conference is scheduled to begin at 10am.

Dr Mahathir said the decision, however, was not made by the Government.

Without the participation of the Prime Minister and the Menteri Besar, Dr Mahathir said he was not sure whether the meeting could still be referred to as a Conference of Rulers.

Dr Mahathir, as Umno president, last Saturday had led senior Umno leaders to meet the Malay Rulers at Istana Negara to brief them on the proposed amendments. At that meeting, the Rulers told Umno leaders that they needed more time to study the amendments before making a decision.

Dr Mahathir told reporters this after bidding farewell to visiting Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa at the KL Hilton today.

He was asked to comment on the decision by the Sultan of Kelantan to oppose the amendments. Dr Ma-

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hathir said he had expected the decision.

When told that several other Rulers may oppose the amendments, Dr Mahathir said: "This shows that parliamentary democracy in this country is being hindered.

"It looks like the people do not have the freedom to make decisions ... I am saddened by this. I wish to stress that this (the amendments) is the wish of the people.

"Wherever we went the people said that they are not satisfied with the freedom the Rulers have to beat and victimise the people, and commit civil offences. This cannot be accepted in these modern times."

Asked how confident he was that the Rulers would agree to the amendments, the Prime Minister said it was difficult to say at the moment, but added that the Government would go ahead with its decision to follow the procedures to take the Bill through all stages of vetting.

Asked what would happen if the amendments are rejected by the Rulers, Dr Mahathir said the Government would study its next move.

When asked whether it was true that some Rulers had reservations about certain parts of the proposed amendments, Dr Mahathir said he had heard that this was so, but added that some Rulers had indicated they supported the amendments.

To a question whether there would be a constitutional crisis if the Rulers rejected the amendments while Parliament approved them, Dr Mahathir said: "We will wait and see".

He was also asked to comment whether the Rulers'

not to attend

Remain calm,
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possible rejection of the proposed amendments would give Semangat 46 a new lease of life.

The Prime Minister said: "The party is already half dead. Soon it will be gone. They want to exploit the issue."

He urged the people to be calm while the Government looked for ways to solve the issue amicably.