

MAHATHIR - CONSTITUTION  
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KUALA LUMPUR, DEC 17 (BERNAMA) -- A SPECIAL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WILL BE HELD ON JAN. 9 (AND 10 TO DISCUSS THREE AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT A SPECIAL SITTING OF THE DEWAN RAKYAT WOULD BE HELD ON JAN. 9 AND THAT OF THE DEWAN NEGARA ON JAN. 10.

THE DATES WERE DECIDED AT A 2-1/2 HOUR SPECIAL MEETING OF THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL WHICH HE CHAIRED AT THE PARTY'S HEADQUARTERS TODAY.

THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL 1983 WHICH WAS PASSED BY PARLIAMENT IN AUGUST AND GIVEN THE ROYAL ASSENT THREE DAYS AGO HAD BEEN GAZETTED AND ENFORCED.

THE SPECIAL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WOULD BE HELD TO PASS A BILL TO AMEND THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION TO:

+ RESTORE ARTICLE 150 REGARDING THE PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE IT WAS AMENDED BY THE 1983 AMENDMENT BILL;

+ REPEAL THE AMENDMENT MADE BY THE 1983 BILL TO THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE OF THE CONSTITUTION PERTAINING TO THE ROYAL ASSENT FOR LAWS PASSED BY THE STATE ASSEMBLIES; AND

+ AMEND THE AMENDED ARTICLE 66 PERTAINING TO THE ROYAL ASSENT.

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SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE MEETING, THE PRIME MINISTER WENT OVER THE AMENDMENTS TO BE TABLED IN PARLIAMENT.

HE SAID THAT THE AMENDMENT TO BE MADE TO ARTICLE 66(5) WOULD EXTEND THE PERIOD FOR THE ROYAL ASSENT FROM 15 DAYS TO 30 DAYS, DURING WHICH THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG COULD EXPRESS HIS OBJECTIONS OR VIEWS WHICH WOULD BE FORWARDED TO PARLIAMENT.

'PARLIAMENT WILL CONSIDER THEM (THE OBJECTIONS). BUT, AFTER 30 DAYS, THE BILL WILL BECOME LAW WHETHER IT HAS RECEIVED THE ROYAL ASSENT OR NOT,' HE SAID. -- MORE 1910/II

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ON ARTICLE 150, CONCERNING THE PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY, HE SAID THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG WOULD BE BOUND BY ARTICLE 40(1) WHICH STIPULATES THAT HE ACTS ON THE ADVICE OF THE CABINET OR OF A MINISTER ACTING UNDER THE GENERAL AUTHORITY OF THE CABINET.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE AMENDMENT TO THE EIGHT SCHEDULE WHILE MAKES UNNECESSARY THE ROYAL ASSENT FOR BILLS PASSED BY STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES WOULD BE REPEALED.

THIS, HE SAID, WAS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE RULERS WOULD THEIR ASSENT UNLESS THEY HAD VALID REASONS NOT TO.

HE SAID THE RULERS HAD GIVEN A VERBAL UNDERTAKING THAT THIS UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE ADHERED TO.

THE AMENDMENTS WILL REQUIRE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY AND THIS THE GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS PLURALITY IN PARLIAMENT, SHOULD FIND NO DIFFICULTY IN GETTING.

ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD COMPROMISED SO MUCH ON THE ISSUE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID: +IT IS DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS WITHOUT CREATING A ATMOSPHERE THAT IS NOT SO NICE.+ -- MORE  
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT DISSENTING AND ASSENTING VIEWS WERE ALWAYS HEARD IN ANY NEGOTIATION, AND THESE THINGS USUALLY SHOWED THAT A COMPROMISE WAS BEING WORKED OUT.

HE SAID AMENDMENTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TABLE IN PARLIAMENT WERE WHAT IT HAD PROMISED IN THE LETTER TO THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG.

HE SAID HE WOULD CALL A MEETING OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL SUPREME COUNCIL ON JAN. 8 TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTS.

HE WOULD ALSO MEET MENTRIS BESAR ON A DATE YET TO BE FIXED FOR THE SAME PURPOSE. -- BERNAMA 2052/ZCM