

# Parliament has final say

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the principle of 'final say' by the representatives of the people is still guaranteed even though the Government had compromised in finding a solution to the Constitutional amendment problem.**

He said what was important was that the compromise amendment would allay any uncertainty in the use of royal assent by the King to reject any decision of Parliament.

"This will ensure that the administration of the nation will not be disrupted and what had happened in the past few months will not be repeated.

However, the Prime Minister said he was sad because the solution to the Constitutional issue should have been achieved without demonstration and confusion "which has given rise to somewhat clouded relations between the Rulers and the people.

## 'Clouded relations'

"The responsibility for this must be borne by those who purposely sparked off problems; whereas such problems should not have arisen," he added when presenting the 1984 Constitution (Amendment) Bill in the Dewan Rakyat. "They are the obstructionists who wish to see the Government and the nation attacked by all sorts of disasters."

He was grateful that the Constitutional issue was solved through a compromise.

The Prime Minister explained that the Government's sincerity in settling the issue could be seen by the offers made.

The amendments were aimed at eliminating any doubt on the rights of Parliament to make laws.

"Previously the Ruler had 15 days from the date a Bill is presented to give his assent, after which it automatically becomes law.

"Under the new amendments, the 15-day period is amended to 30 days. If the King objects to the proposed law, it goes back to Parliament for further debate.

If it is accepted by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, the King will have another 30 days to assent, after which it automatically becomes law.

To some constitutional experts, the amendments presented today, give new powers to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to participate directly or actively in law-making," he said.

## 'No power'

On the other hand, he said, there were people who felt that the King had the power to with-

hold assent to Bills passed by Parliament.

"Whatever views expressed by the experts, what is clear is that under the original provision of 66(5), Parliament was not in a capacity to take any Constitutional-based action to overcome the refusal by the King to give assent to any Bills passed by Parliament."

He said the new amendments will clear the way of overcoming whatever deadlock if the King did not agree with any Bills passed by Parliament, subject to other provisions in the Constitution which determines the power according to the discretion of the King and the Rulers' Conference.

He explained that it was not the intention of the Government to amend the Constitution arbitrarily.

However, because 1983 was the right time to review the constituencies, the opportunity was taken to review other provisions of the Constitution.

He said one of the provisions which was not "in order" was Article 66(5) where interpretation could be made that Parliament in effect has no power and that this country was ruled by Rulers who had absolute

power and were not subject to the Constitution.

Because of this "laxity", several incidents took place in the States where for sometime the State Governments ruled outside the law.

"To avoid such incidents being repeated, Article 66(5) was amended."

He said for several months the Government's efforts to formulate laws were obstructed and "this has given rise to whether it is true that Malaysia practices the parliamentary democratic system and constitutional monarchy."