

CNS8785

R GE 11-12 00179 ED228

aae

Mahathir - Umno

UMNO TO INITIATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 10⁹² (Bernama) -- Umno will initiate moves to amend the federal constitution to withdraw the immunity accorded to the Malay Rulers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight. (P)

The Prime Minister said the Umno Supreme Council which made the decision tonight, would recommend to the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council on Saturday to ask the Cabinet to take steps to amend the constitution.

+In view of the violation of this privileges (immunity), the Umno Supreme Council, after a lengthy discussion, felt that the immunity should be withdrawn through constitutional amendment, + he told reporters after chairing an emergency meeting of the council here.

Almost all the supreme council members attended the two-hour meeting at the Umno headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir said the supreme council felt that the immunity accorded to the rulers when the federal constitution was drafted, was not meant to allow rulers to be involved in criminal acts like beating or killing people.--more

▼11/12/00-35MST

CNS8787

R GE 11-12 00157 ED229

aae

Mahathir - Umno 2 Kuala Lumpur

On the other hand, the immunity was aimed at recognising their position as rulers, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Umno supreme council was convinced that the decision to withdraw the immunity was in line with the wishes of the people as clearly shown in the debate on the substantive motion on the matter at the Dewan Rakyat this afternoon.

The motion received the unanimous support of the members of parliament, including the opposition.

+We are aware of the possible obstacles (when amending the constitution) but we will strive to fulfil the wishes of the people so that they will be protected by the law, + he said.

He said Umno would take all possible action required to ensure the success of the move.

He said tonight's meeting of the council expressed regrets over the Douglas Gomez incident.--more

▼11/12/00-47MST

CNS8791

R GE: 11-12 00181. ED230

aae

Mahathir - Umno 3 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said from the debate in the Dewan Rakyat, it was clear that the Gomez case was not an isolated one. There were many similar cases, some even worse.

+It is clear that the people of Johor are in fear and as such some incidents have not been reported,+ he said adding that this was unhealthy and should not happen in a democratic country.

Dr Mahathir said the amendment (to withdraw immunity) needed the consent of the Conference of Rulers and the government might not get such consent. + but we will find ways to achieve this aim.+

He said the move might cause a crisis between the government and the Istana but he was confident that some rulers would realise that such crime should not be left unchecked.

He said Umno leaders might visit the states as they did during the constitutional crisis in 1983 and send its delegation to meet the rulers if the government failed to get their consent.---more

▼11/12/01-07MST

CNS8794

R GE 11-12 00131 ED231

aae

Mahathir - Umno 4 Kuala Lumpur

+God willing, with the support of the people, I am confident we will succeed,+ he said.

In this matter, he said, what was clear was that the people, including the opposition parties, had given moral support and were prepared to stand by the government in facing whatever possibility, including prosecution for questioning the rights of the rulers.

Dr Mahathir said the son of the Sultan of Johore, Tengku Majid Idris, who was alleged to have assaulted a hockey player recently, would be charged in court if there was a case against him.

He also said that the government was identifying those who abetted the Johor Sultan and action would be taken against them.--more

▼11/12/01-20MST

CNS8795

R GE 11-12 00105 ED232

aae

Mahathir - Umno 5 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the government would continue to provide protection to Gomez and his family.

+I have given the assurance that the government will provide protection to all those who have been victimised,+ he said.

He believed that the move to amend the constitution would not be turned into a political issue as this time the people had realised the weakness in the constitution.

The meeting also decided to freeze the setting up of new Umno branches until the delineation of electoral boundaries was completed next year. --Bernama

▼11/12/01-31MST