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Mahathir-Rulers

MBs CAN HAVE AUDIENCE WITH RULERS, SAYS PM

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LANGKAWI, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Menteri Besar are free to explain to their Rulers the Federal Government's stand on the proposed constitutional amendment to remove the Rulers' immunity from criminal charges, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir said it was up to the Menteri Besar's discretion to do so as the Federal Government would proceed with the proposed amendment to the Federal Constitution.

Reporters had approached the Prime Minister to comment on Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Taib's willingness to seek an audience with the Sultan of Selangor to offer explanation on the matter.

Dr Mahathir said: "The Federal Government has no objection to the Menteri Besar wanting to have audience to offer explanation and seek the Rulers' consent."

The Prime Minister, who was on a one-day visit to inspect development projects here, was also asked whether the government would disband the Johor Military Force or absorb it into the Malaysian Armed Forces.

He replied that the government had not given the matter a thought yet.

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Mabathir-Rulers 2 (last) Langkawi

Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba was reported earlier as saying that the Cabinet would decide whether the Johor Military Force, which serves only the Sultan of Johor, should be disbanded or otherwise.

Dr Mahathir also said the government had already made known its stand on those involved in beating up Maktab Sultan Abu Bakar's hockey coach Douglas Gomez.

"The government's stand is that whoever breaks the law, who is outside the special privileges accorded the Rulers, will face action regardless of whether they are soldiers of the Johor Military Force or personal staff (of the Sultan of Johor)," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister, who was asked whether the proposed constitutional amendment would make the Rulers' Declaration redundant, said the declaration would be retained although admittedly it was not that effective since some Rulers had refused to sign it. -- Bernama

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