

CNS1854

U GE 16-12 001.38 EA234

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Mahathir-Parliament

SPECIAL SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT ON JAN 18, 19 AND 20, 8:30PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet today decided to convene special sittings of Parliament on Jan 18, 19 and 20 to discuss amendments to the Federal Constitution. ---

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Dewan Rakyat would sit on Jan 18 and 19 and the Dewan Negara, on Jan 20.

Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar had been instructed to immediately submit notices to both Houses in accordance with the regulation requiring Parliament to be given '28 days' notice of any special sitting, he added.

The Cabinet meeting, however, did not specifically discuss the amendment to be made to the constitution, he told reporters at the Royal Malaysian Air Force station in Sungai Besi, here.

Dr Mahathir was leaving for Singapore to meet the island republic's First Deputy Prime Minister Brig-den Lee Hsien Loong. Late today, he would stop over in Johor Bahru to meet Johor Umno leaders and state Barisan Nasional MPs and assemblymen, before attending a Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry dinner. -- more

16/12/16-22MST

CNS1860

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Mahathir-Parliament 2 Kuala Lumpur

Last Saturday the BN Supreme Council decided that the government should amend the Federal Constitution to remove the immunity from prosecution enjoyed by the rulers and likely obstacles to the amendment.

The proposal was made following a police report by Maktab Sultan Abu Bakar (MSAB) hockey coach Douglas Gomez alleging that he was assaulted by the Sultan of Johor at Istana Bukit Serene, Johor Bahru, on Nov 30. Gomez was said to have been summoned to the palace after he criticised the Johor Hockey Association leadership over a directive to pull the MSAB team out of the Malaysian Schools Champion hockey tournament here on Nov 25.

Following Gomez' allegation, the Dewan Rakyat unanimously passed on Dec 10 a resolution tabled by Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Babawich, among other things, decided that measures be taken to avoid a recurrence of such incident.

The same night, the Umno Supreme Council, at an emergency meeting, agreed together with BN to urge the Cabinet to amend the Federal Constitution to remove the Rulers' immunity from prosecution. -- more

16/12/16-29MST

CNS1890

U GE 16-12 00166 EA236

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Mahathir-Parliament 3 Kuala Lumpur

Asked whether today's Cabinet meeting decided on which article of the constitution to amend, Dr Mahathir said : +It has not been decided yet.+

Dr Mahathir was also asked why the government did not hold a public rally to garner the people's support to amend the constitution as was done in 1983.

He said- this was not necessary because the government was confident that the Rulers would accept the proposed amendment.

+They (the Rulers) are also aware that times have changed and the Old ways can no longer be accepted. . . immunity is not necessary,+ he added.

To another question, he said the local press had played their role with full responsibility in the issue involving the palace.

+I feel that the press has played an important role to explain the situation and not press for abolition of the monarchy system. They only gave an explanation. + he said; -- more

♥16/12/16-56MST

CNS1891

U GE 16-12 00104 EA237

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Mahathir-Parliament 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

He said the explanation of the true situation relating to the issue by the press was good because it dispelled confusion among the people; especially those who did not know why the constitutional amendment was needed.

Asked whether the Cabinet meeting discussed the radio licence given to the Johor palace, he said the matter was not raised.

On his meeting with Lee in Singapore, Dr Mahathir said it was a normal visit.

Lee is now undergoing chemotherapy after being confirmed to be suffering from cancer. -- Bernama