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Mahathir-consent

GOVT TO OBTAIN CONSENT OF RULERS, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government would obtain the consent of the rulers to amend the Federal Constitution to remove their immunity from prosecution.

He said a special meeting of the Conference of Rulers would be held on Jan 16, prior to the special sitting of Parliament scheduled for Jan 18 to 20 to amend the constitution.

+We will obtain the consent of the rulers,+ he told reporters after presenting prizes to winners of the Premier Equestrian Championship at the Bukit Kiara Equestrian & Country Resort, near here.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a question on the stand of the opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP) to support the proposed constitutional amendment only if the government obtained the prior consent of the rulers.

He said that in general the people supported the government in the matter and that the people would definitely question the stand of any party which withheld support owing to political ideologies. -- more

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On Parti Semangat 46 which had expressed opposition to the proposed amendment, Dr Mahathir said the party was confused over the removal of the immunity from prosecution and the position of the rulers.

He said both matters were unrelated and that in many countries the position of the rulers was guaranteed even without the immunity from prosecution.

+We have stated that we want to retain the institution of monarchy but, surely, in this modern world the people cannot accept the immunity from prosecution given to anyone to harm others,+ he added.

The Prime Minister said it was untrue that the rulers would lose their supremacy and sovereignty without the immunity from prosecution, as Semangat 46 claimed.

+That is their assumption. Does it mean that a ruler can only be one if he can beat up people or kill people? That is not true,+ he said. -- more

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He said Semangat 46 could hold meetings with party members and also the public throughout the country on the proposed amendment so long as what it resorted to did not contravene the laws, such as instigating the people or fuelling riots.

On claims by Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik that there had been palace involvement in the distribution of timber concessions, Dr Mahathir said he was studying the data on the matter.

He declined to comment on the matter, saying he had yet to obtain the details.

Asked about the claim by Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan that the temporary freeze on export of logs from Sabah was a political move, Dr Mahathir said the claim was baseless.

He said the freeze was introduced because there was intensified logging in Sabah and if logs continued to be exported it would only be detrimental to the state. -- more

▼20/12/19-10MST

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The government would have no objections if logs in Sabah were used in downstream industries, he added.

Dr Mahathir said the freeze on exports did not involve logs in Sarawak because the state had much timber resources and had a plan to reduce logging.

The Prime Minister also said that the Barisan Nasional (BN) would have to study what Pairin meant by a forum to discuss the 20-point Agreement (by which Sabah and Sarawak joined the federation) because it differed from the original proposal for a debate. -- Bernama

▼20/12/19-11MST