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Mahathir-immunity

PART OF THE RULERS' POWER OF CLEMENCY TO BE REMOVED, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that the constitutional amendments to remove the immunity of the rulers from prosecution will include the removal of part of the rulers' power of clemency and an amendment on the provision on sedition.

The additional amendments were essential to ensure the effectiveness of the amendments relating to the rulers' immunity, he said.

With the amendment on the provision on clemency, the rulers would no longer have the power to pardon themselves and immediate members of their family like their children, he told reporters after a meeting with about 1,500 Umno leader; from throughout the country, at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

Dr Mahathir said that under such circumstances, the power of clemency would be moved to other parties, like another ruler.

The rulers will however continue to sit on the Pardons Board in respect of other cases. -- more

▼30/12/19-31MST

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+Relating to sedition, the amendment is essential as any allegations against rulers who commit, any offences come under the definition of sedition ... that is if a person goes to the police station to allege that a ruler has committed an offence, this in itself is sedition, + he said.

If the police report was seditious, it would prevent the public from making complaints on any criminal offences committed by the rulers, he said.

+As such, we have to amend and abolish the provision on sedition in the constitution, + he said.

The Prime Minister said that the proposed amendment to the constitution to remove the immunity of the rulers would be tabled in Parliament on Jan

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On Article 38(4) of the federal constitution which states that +No law directly affecting the privileges, position, honours or dignities of the Rulers shall be passed without the consent of the Conference of Rulers, he said that what was to be tabled was a Bill and not a law. -- more

▼30/12/20-06MST

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Dr Mahathir said that the meeting of the Umno top leadership with the Conference of Rulers on Jan 1.6 was not aimed at seeking the consent of the Rulers Conference on the amendments to the constitution:

+Their consent 'will only be sought after the Bill has been approved by Parliament because at the stage when the Bill is debated in Parliament it is not law ... so we have the right to debate on it in Parliament although without the consent of the rulers .+

+After that will the consent of the rulers be required and if consent is given, the law will be valid,+ he said.

He was confident that the Conference of Rulers would give its consent on the Bill.

The Prime Minister also said that the consent that was needed to validate the law in this context was the consent of the majority and not the unanimous consent of the Conference Of Rulers.--more

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He said that the amendments to the constitution would not affect the political stability in the country. It may affect the administration of certain aspects only, he added.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that at today's meeting he explained to the Umno leaders on the problem (relating to the rulers' immunity) which had occurred and the government's plan to overcome the problem.

+We feel that with the immunity, there is a possibility that a crime is committed by a ruler... this has happened and if a crime is committed, the people's views of the rulers will be a negative one and the people will no longer respect the rulers,+ he said.

He said that the government planned to abolish the immunity so that the rulers would not do anything that would expose them to legal action and as such the people would continue to respect the rulers.

The Umno leaders attending the meeting gave their unanimous support to the government's stand and called on the government to act firmly on the matter. -- Bernama