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Mahathir-Rulers

PM CONFIDENT OF RULERS' AYE TO AMENDMENTS

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is confident that the Malay Rulers will agree to the proposed constitutional amendments to remove their immunity from prosecution.

It would be very unlikely that they prefer to retain the immunity merely to enable them to beat up or kill other people, he said.

+I've talked to the Rulers and they are not like that,+ he told reporters after opening the New Klang Valley Expressway here today.

Moreover, he said, the immunity granted by the Federal Constitution was of no benefit to the Rulers.

The government will table a constitutional amendment bill to remove the Rulers' immunity from prosecution at a special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat on Jan 18 and Jan 19.

The Dewan Negara will debate the bill on Jan 20.-- more

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Mahathir-Rulers 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Last Saturday, UMNO leaders led by party president Dr Mahathir presented the draft of the proposed amendments before the Rulers at an informal meeting at Istana Negara here.

The Rulers told the UMNO delegation that they needed until Saturday, which is also the date for the Conference of Rulers' next meeting, to deliberate and decide on the matter.

When asked on the government's next course of action if the Conference of Rulers meeting on Saturday rejected the proposed amendments, he replied: +We'll find ways to overcome it.+

+I think the people will reject Rulers who think they can only be Rulers by having the immunity. Even in other countries, there is no such thing.+

Dr Mahathir also said the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday would be briefed on last Saturday's informal meeting between UMNO leaders and the Rulers.

He also said the government would study whether any of the +January 10 Declaration+ issued by some 100 Malay intellectuals yesterday could be implemented.

The gathering of the intellectuals at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka here had, among others, called for a review of the function and position of the Rulers and for the abolition of all kinds of feudal practices.-- Bernama