

ACCORD

Six Rulers and Govt reach

By WONG CHUN WAI and ZULKIFLI TALIB

KUALA LUMPUR: A majority of the Rulers and the Government have agreed to a revised version of the Constitution (Amendments) Bill limiting royal immunity.

Six of the nine Rulers met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Istana Negara yesterday where they heard the views of the Attorney-General on counter-proposals the Rulers made on Saturday.

Dr Mahathir said the Rulers and the Government had reached an understanding on the issue.

"The Government has agreed and the Rulers have also agreed. However, it is not official yet.

"The Rulers said since today's meeting was not official, they could not give an official confirmation," Dr Mahathir told newsmen outside the palace gates.

The Prime Minister said the Rulers were expected to officially endorse yesterday's decision at the Conference of Rulers meeting today.

"On our part, I am confident the Conference of Rulers will endorse (the changes).

"But several of the Rulers were not present today. I do not know whether those not present would still have a different stand," he said.

The Rulers present were the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan, the Raja of Perlis, and the Sultans of Pahang and Terengganu.

The Regent of Selangor represented the Sultan and the Regent of Perak Raja Nazrin were present at the two-hour meeting which started at 4pm.

Absent were the Sultans of Kedah, Kelantan and Johor who were reported to be in their respective states.

Accompanying Dr Mahathir were his deputy Abdul Ghafar Baba and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Asked to elaborate on the changes in the bill, Dr Mahathir said: "There are some additional provisions but I cannot reveal them now. I will explain tomorrow."

Dr Mahathir, who will table the bill at a special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat, described the meeting as positive.

Before tabling the bill, Dr Mahathir will brief his Cabinet colleagues on the revised version and attend a pre-council meeting for Barisan Nasional MPs.

The original bill sought to remove the Rulers' immunity in their personal capacity and render any law which attaches sanctity to the palace void.

understanding on revised bill

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