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Rulers-Court
SPECIAL COURT TO TRY ERRANT RULERS

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- An additional amendment will be made to the Federal Constitution to create a special court to try errant Rulers, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The proposed court would be made up of Supreme Court judges, he told reporters at Parliament House on emerging from a pre-council meeting with Barisan Nasional MPs and Senators.

He added: "We will make an amendment to provide for that... but there will be no immunity from the law that applies to everybody else except that the court is different."

The meeting was held ahead of the two-day special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat, beginning later this afternoon to discuss amendments to the Constitution to strip the Rulers of their legal immunity.

The Dewan Negara is scheduled to sit on Wednesday for the same purpose.

The new development came in the wake of a flurry of meetings this morning by the Cabinet, the Rulers and the BN. -- more "

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Dr Mahathir said he had yet to receive any news on the Rulers' consent to the proposed constitutional changes.

"There is no news of consent yet. It is up to them. They (the Rulers) are supposed to meet at 10.30am," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the parliamentary sessions would proceed as scheduled "with or without the consent of the Rulers."

He then briefed newsmen on the counter-proposals by the Rulers to the amendments proposed by the government to remove the immunity of the Rulers from criminal and civil proceedings in their private capacities.

The Prime Minister said the special court would be made up of Supreme Court Judges. "It is a special court to try the rulers."

There would also be other minor changes to the government-proposed amendments.

For example, he said: "If the Yang di-Pertua Negeri is involved, then the Pardons Board would be chaired by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and not the Chief Minister." -- more

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Under the government-proposed amendments, the Rulers will not chair the state Pardons Board when dealing with cases involving the royalty.

Dr Mahathir also said the changes proposed by the Rulers would not affect the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill before parliament.

"The principle of no immunity for the Rulers is there," he added. --
Bernama

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