

CNS9643

B GE 20-01 00127 EG908

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Mahathir-Cabinet

CABINET DECIDES TO WITHDRAW RULERS' UNWRITTEN PERKS

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 20 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet today decided to withdraw from the Malay Rulers all facilities and privileges unwritten in and not provided for by the Constitution and the law.

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today it made the decision because the government felt that if the Malay Rulers were merely upholding the law without taking into account the spirit of the Constitution, then it would have to do likewise.

"We shall also withdraw all facilities and privileges which we have over-extended to them," he told reporters at the lobby of the Dewan Negara at Parliament House here.-- more

▼20/01/19-35MST

CNS9659

B GE 20-01 00140 EG909

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Mahathir-Cabinet 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir arrived at Parliament House at about 6.10 pm and followed for 30 minutes the debate at the upper house on the Federal Constitution Bill (Amendment) 1993.

Without spelling out which of the unwritten facilities and privileges would be withdrawn, he said all this while the government had not bothered much about such perks which had been over-extended to the Rulers.

However, he said: "We now limit them to only those provided for...only the written ones".

Dr Mahathir said among the unwritten facilities and privileges to be taken away include the Prime Minister's briefing to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the weekly Cabinet meeting every Wednesday.

"The briefing is merely a practice and not provided for by the law," he said.-- more

▼20/01/19-54MST

CNS9674

B GE 20-01 00165 EG910

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Mahathir-Cabinet 3 Kuala Lumpur

The Prime Minister said he did mention about the possibility of the government withdrawing the unwritten facilities and privileges when winding up the debate on the Bill at yesterday's special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat.

Asked when would the government implement the decision, he said: "It seems Selangor has started implementing it today and the Federal Government has made a similar decision at today's Cabinet meeting."

On the status of royal wards in government hospitals in the context of today's Cabinet decision, the Prime Minister said he was unsure whether this was provided for in the constitution or the law.

He said if it was not, then this facility would also be withdrawn.

However, he said, the facility for the rulers to have exclusive vehicle registration numbers from one to 10 would definitely be withdrawn as this was not provided for in any of the laws.-- more

▼20/01/20-06MST

CNS9709

B GE 20-01 00196 EG912

aae tbe

Mahathir-Cabinet 4 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the government's decision affects only state having Rulers because in states without rulers, the Yang di-Pertuas Negeri do not enjoy the facilities and privileges accorded the rulers.

He said the government would be flexible in extending facilities and privileges to the Yang di-Pertuas Negeri.

Asked on how much would the government save in term of civil list allocations following the withdrawal of the unwritten facilities and privileges from the Rulers, he said the government had never taken that into account as all this while it had been accommodative.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that the withdrawal of such facilities and privileges would, to some extent, cause strained relations between the government and the istana.

However, he said, if and when necessary and when official matters arise, the government will still have to have audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong or the rulers.

Asked whether the Yang di-Pertuan Agong had given any indication or statement of withholding assent to the Federal Constitution Bill (Amendment) 1993, he said his majesty did not state anything . -- more

▼20/01/20-43MST

CNS9728

B GE 20-01 00150 EG913

aae tbe

Mahathir-Cabinet 5 Kuala Lumpur

On the support secured by the government to have the Federal Constitution Bill (Amendment) 1993 passed by the Dewan Rakyat yesterday, Dr Mahathir said all MPs from Barisan Nasional component parties as well as Independent MPs had voted for the bill.

He said although DAP and PAS Members of Parliament had abstained from voting, they had voiced their support when debating the bill.

"This is the first time where an amendment bill gets the support of almost all the members but the votes differ. That's a different matter," he said.

He said the DAP did not vote to support to bill because its MPs have been told not to support the government's motion.

Yesterday, 133 MPs voted in support of the Federal Constitution Bill (Amendment) 1993, 23 abstained and none objected.-- more

▼20/01/21-14MST

CNS9730

B GE 20-01 00125 EG914

aae tbe

Mahathir-Cabinet 6 (last) Kuala Lumpur

The Bill seeks to remove the legal immunity of the Malay Rulers, limit their power of pardon and allow Members and Parliament and state legislative assemblies to discuss matters pertaining to the rulers so long as they do not advocate for the abolition of the country's constitutional monarchy.

The Prime Minister was also asked to comment on a claim by a senator when debating the bill at the Dewan Negara today that there was alarm among investors over speculation of a constitutional crisis in the country.

Dr Mahathir said the inflow of foreign investments had nothing to do with the rulers and investors should not feel alarmed.-- Bernama

▼20/01/21-16MST