

R GE 29-01 00203 EA121

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Mahathir-Rulers

FUTURE GENERATION MAY NOT FAVOUR CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY, SAYS MAHATHIR

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JITRA, Jan 29<sup>193</sup> (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there was no guarantee that the future generation would want to retain the country's constitutional monarchy.

There was no way of knowing how the future generation would think although the present government had given an assurance that it would try as far as possible to retain the institution.

"We can only give an assurance," he told reporters here after lunch at the residence of the Kubang Pasu District Officer here.

He earlier attended a meet-the-people gathering with residents of Kubang Pasu at the Dewan Jitra here.

Dr Mahathir said the government would retain the system of constitutional monarchy through ways that would not arouse the people's hatred for the Rulers.

He said that the people still accept Rulers who did not violate the law.

"That is why we want to draft laws (amend the constitution) so that with such laws and with the awareness to uphold the law, Rulers will not commit acts which are not desirable," he added. -- more

▼29/01/16-12MST

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Mahathir-Rulers 2 Jitra

Dr Mahathir said he had not received the latest information on the stand of the Rulers on the recent federal constitutional amendments to strip them of the legal immunity in their personal capacity since they rejected the proposals.

As far as he knew, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah had also not yet given his assent to the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 1993, passed by Parliament during a special three-day sitting last week.

Asked to comment on reports that the Pahang and Johor palaces were involved in politics by campaigning to garner the support of the people, he said that such action would tarnish the image of the Rulers.

The constitution did not allow Rulers to be involved in politics, especially party politics, as it was inevitable that parties which did not agree with them would strongly criticise them and their politics, he added.

"Although they may be Rulers, they will be criticised or ridiculed. It is a normal thing in politics for such things to be done," he said. -- more

▼29/01/16-30MST

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Mahathir-Rulers 3 Jitra

The Prime Minister said the Rulers felt that they could gain the support of the people through such campaigns.

"The people are now aware and will not merely give their support just because they (the Rulers) are the ones campaigning but they will give their support if the Rulers uphold the constitution," he added.

Asked if the government admitted it had erred by "spoiling the Rulers" too much, he said: "This has been admitted, not only this time. We have somewhat admitted our mistakes.

"Because we want to avoid (causing) strain with the palace, we accepted things that should not be done by the istana and, as such, such things occur more frequently.

"We hoped that in subtle ways we can advise (the Rulers) and overcome such problems but the fact remains that such an approach did not work."

Dr Mahathir said the government did not want the issue to prolong but at the same time it could not stop the people from voicing their views.

"Today, it seems, many are voicing their views. I think when all is said and done, there will be no more," he added. -- more

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Mahathir-Rulers 4 (last) Jitra

On the international perception of the issue, Dr Mahathir said that so far he had only read reports of newspapers in Britain.

"As we all know, in Britain, they are also facing the same problem. So, for them, this reflected the current trend... that is, if the people have been educated, they will no longer accept conventional ways that are disagreeable with current thoughts and values," he added.

Asked for his reaction to the Johor State Secretary Datuk Abdul Rahim Ramli's apology to Johor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin for ignoring the state government in matters involving the Sultan of Johor, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the Johor government whether or not to take him at his word. -- Bernama

▼29/01/16-48MST