

CNS4524

U GE 01-02 00230 EA308

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Mahathir-Rulers

GOVT ATTAINS AIM OF ENDING PALACE EXTRAVAGANCE, CRIME

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93 (P)  
KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government had attained its objective of ending criminal acts and extravagance by royalty through the constitutional amendments withdrawing the legal immunity of the Rulers.

At the same time, the Prime Minister also refuted claims that Malaysia was faced with a constitutional crisis following Parliament's approval of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill which had yet to be given the assent by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"Many people are saying there is a constitutional crisis in Malaysia... there is no crisis. It has been resolved," he said when speaking at the launching of the National Agriculture Policy here. His words were greeted with applause by the more than 5,000 people present.

Dr Mahathir said no more criminal acts were being committed because the royalty would not dare to engage in such acts any more.

He also said that the government no longer gave funds to the royalty as they wished, and therefore had cut down on their extravagance.

"We have succeeded (in ending the criminal acts and extravagance)," Dr Mahathir said in his speech which centred on the call for Malaysians, particularly the Malays, to change their attitude to pursue progress. -- more

▼01/02/18-15MST

U GE 01-02 00172 EA310

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Rptng, rephrasing second last para

Mahathir-Rulers 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the government was prepared to face any eventuality to come to the defence of the people.

He admitted that fault also lay with the government for the incidences of crime and extravagance by royalty in the past.

"We were also at fault; when they (the royalty) committed offences we remained silent and they continued to commit offences, even worse than before," he said.

The Prime Minister suggested that the royalty change their attitude to adjust to the times.

"We (the people) have to change (our attitude) and so do they," he said.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir touched on the Malay custom which prohibited the people from committing treachery.

He added, however, that the people could not continue to stick to the old but should accept the new, and that all the people should change their attitude. -- more

end of rptn

▼01/02/18-50MST

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Mahathir-Rulers 3 Kuala Lumpur

Emphasising that there was no constitutional crisis, Dr Mahathir said what was happening was only "change".

He said that in keeping with the times, customs which were found to be no longer suitable and which were contrary to religion should be changed.

"It is not that we want to do away with the institution of monarchy. We are prepared to retain the system but in a new way. Even agriculture is undertaken in the modern way," he said in reference to the agriculture policy he launched.

Speaking to reporters after the function, Dr Mahathir said the government was in no hurry to refer the constitutional amendments back to Parliament though the Constitution sets "a reasonable time frame" for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to give his assent to the Bill.

"We are in no hurry. For us, the objective of the government has been attained," he said. -- more

▼01/02/18-51MST

CNS4557

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Mahathir-Rulers 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

The government, he said, was prepared to wait for two months for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to give his assent to the Bill.

(According to the Constitution, the Bill will be referred back to Parliament if the Yang di-Pertuan Agong does not give his assent. It will be debated and approved once again by Parliament, and will become law 30 days later even without the royal assent.)

The government proposed the amendments to remove the legal immunity of the Rulers after several alleged criminal acts by the Sultan of Johor which culminated in his alleged assault of a hockey coach. -- Bernama

▼01/02/18-56MST