

Move to abolish immunity of Rulers has achieved objective, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Government's move to abolish the immunity of the Malay Rulers in their personal capacity has already achieved its objective, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said one outcome of the move to amend the Federal Constitution was that the Rulers had stopped making unreasonable demands and were abiding by the law.

The Rulers have already ceased making demands for

land and expenditure outside scheduled and budgeted allocations.

"We have achieved our objective. As far as we are concerned, the issue of the amendments has been resolved and there is no constitutional crisis whatsoever," he told reporters after launching the National Agriculture Policy 1992-2010 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Asked to elaborate on his view that the matter had been resolved, Dr Mahathir said that if the King did not

assent to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1993, it would again be submitted to both Houses of Parliament for debate and subsequent approval. This was provided for in the Constitution.

"After approval by both Houses, it will then be sent to the King and if assent is still not given, the Bill becomes law after 30 days.

"We are in no hurry. As far as we are concerned, we have achieved our objective as it will be a matter of time before the Bill becomes law.

"According to the Consti-

tution, a reasonable time-frame is given for the King to assent to Bills approved by the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara," he said.

The Dewan Rakyat approved the Bill on Jan 19 and the Dewan Negara the next day.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had been unhappy with demands for land and additional expenditure by the Rulers.

"Now they have stopped such abuses and when the Bill takes effect appropriate action will be taken against

anyone who takes the law into his own hands, like assaulting people."

Asked whether the people would still have to adhere to traditions such as bowing when greeting the Rulers, Dr Mahathir said such gestures were inappropriate in modern times.

"Some Rulers have said that there is no need to even use the words *duli yang maha mulia* when addressing the royalty," he said.