

Mahathir-Rulers

PM WELCOMES SULTAN OF PAHANG'S POSITIVE STATEMENT

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today welcomed the Sultan of Pahang's statement that the constitution amendment issue can be resolved at next week's Conference of Rulers meeting.

"We welcome a settlement," the Prime Minister and Umno President told a press conference after chairing Umno Supreme Council's monthly meeting here.

In his impromptu speech after performing Friday prayers at Masjid Felda Sungai Klau in Raub yesterday, the Sultan expressed confidence that the "confrontation" between the Rulers and the government could be settled at the Conference of Rulers meeting to be chaired by him on Feb 10 and 11.

Dr Mahathir said he would not be able to attend the meeting because he had to be with Mauritian Prime Minister Sir Anerood Jugnauth who would be visiting the country then.

However, Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba, who is Umno Deputy President, will attend the meeting at Istana Negara. -- more

06/02/14-57MST

CNS7460

U GE 06-02 00137 EB557

see the

Mahathir-Rulers 2 Kuala Lumpur

To a question, Dr Mahathir said the Rulers had not requested for a discussion.

"However, our stand is clear that we hold to the law that he have already passed," he said.

The constitutional amendments to remove the Rulers legal immunity in their personal capacity were approved by the Dewan Rakyat on Jan 19 and Dewan Negara the following day. They are now awaiting royal assent.

The Umno President said the Supreme Council discussed the amendment issue in general and found that there was no significant development.

"...in our view, ultimately the law will be passed," he said, adding that the meeting also discussed the effects of the law and was satisfied with the achievements so far. -- more

06/02/15-23MST

CNS7468

U GE 06-02 00131 EB558

see the

Mahathir-Rulers 3 Kuala Lumpur

Responding to questions, Dr Mahathir dismissed suggestions that the issue has further split the Malay community.

Dr Mahathir said: "We don't think so. The Malays have been divided not because of this but because they are of different political parties.

"Obviously the Opposition parties are trying to seize on this problem in order to enhance their position.

"So, if at all there is any confrontation between the different Malay groups, it is the same old confrontation between the government party and the Opposition party," he added.

The Prime Minister said although members of royal households, including princes, had the right to interfere in politics, such involvement would affect their characters. -- more

CNS7474

U GE 06-02 00155 EB552

aaa tbe

Mahathir-Rulers 4 Kuala Lumpur

"They are also part of the rakyat. The status of Rulers' children is no higher than that of the rakyat and we do not forbid it if they want to act.

"If they interfere in politics, it is their right but it will have effects on their characters. If they start to campaign, we will hold counter campaigns," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister also reaffirmed the government's stand to preserve the constitutional monarchy.

He said: "For as long as this government is in power, we will ensure that the system of constitutional monarchy will continue."

"We can only give assurance based on our ability to continue with the system but we cannot give assurance for any future government which is not of our party.

"Our party is committed to constitutional monarchy," he added. -- more

06/02/15-42MST

CNS7478

U GE 06-02 00127 EB560

aaa tbe

Mahathir-Rulers 5 (last) Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir also said the King would continue to be well informed of Cabinet discussions despite the recent move to stop pre-Cabinet briefings for him.

"The King is kept fully informed on matters discussed by the Cabinet by being extended a copy of all matters discussed by Cabinet. The practice has been continued.

"He will not be ignorant of what the government is discussing or deciding upon. The need to have a discussion with the Prime Minister is something that is a tradition.

"If he really requires to discuss something, of course he can ask for me to see him and I will see him," he added. -- Bernama

06/02/15-46MST