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Parliament-Mahathir

KELANTAN SULTAN'S ATTITUDE ON AMENDMENT ISSUE WORRISOME, SAYS PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8⁷³ (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is concerned that the Sultan of Kelantan's actions relating to the ~~consent~~ of the Conference of Rulers on the constitutional amendments could result in loss of confidence in the Conference and the institution of Rulers.

The Kelantan Ruler's actions pertaining to the constitutional amendment issue had caused much unease, the Prime Minister said.

"Not only is the Federal government not respected but the other Rulers to are not respected," he said when 'tabling the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1993 at a special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat here.

The session is to debate again the Bill which was returned by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah with some modifications after it was passed by Parliament which sat on Jan 1.8-20.

Dr Mahathir said that in rejecting the amendments which had been agreed to by the Rulers, the Sultan of Kelantan had, among other things, claimed that the Parliament sitting which debated the bill in January and today's sitting were invalid. -- more

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He added that when accusations were hurled by one party at another, the other party could retaliate with the same accusations.

He said: "If this Dewan is alleged to be invalid by the Sultan of Kelantan, this Dewan can also claim, with valid reasons, that the appointment and installation of the present Sultan of Kelantan as the Ruler of Kelantan may not be valid. Maybe, there are other people who have more right.

"If allegations like these start, maybe they will spread and continue and mud will be smeared on other people.

"If after meeting in an organised manner, the Conference of Rulers does not stand by its decisions, who will respect the meeting of the Conference of the Rulers or the Conference or the Rulers?"

"I do not want to predict what will follow the loss of confidence and respect in the Conference of Rulers and in the institution of Rulers due to the Sultan of Kelantan's actions."

The Prime Minister likened the Sultan of Kelantan's actions to opening a can of worms whereby the odour from it will also stick to other Rulers. -- more'

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He said the first time Sultan of Kelantan opened the can of worms was opened was when the Sultan! actively and openly campaigned for his uncle's party in the 1990 general election which was not accepted by the people.

The people were angry because the Sultan of Kelantan had then not only ignored the prohibition on Rulers being involved in politics but had also attempted to raise his own family to high office -- a form of nepotism that smacked of feudalism and anti-democracy, he added.

He noted that up to 1990 no one had openly criticised or advised the Rulers, probably because of the Malay customs or fear of running foul of the Sedition Act.

Since the 1990 general election, the people started to criticise the Rulers openly and were no longer afraid because the Sultan of Kelantan had opened the can of-worms, he said. -- more

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The Prime Minister said that because of the Sultan of Kelantan, the customs and people's fear of the law had disappeared as was evident when the people reacted with strong criticism of the Rulers over the Gomez incident.

Douglas Gomez, the hockey coach of Maktab Sultan Abu Bakar, Johor, alleged that he was assaulted by the Sultan of Johor at Istana Bukit Serene, Johor Baharu, last November, after he was summoned to the palace.

He had earlier criticised sports authorities in the state of a decision to withdraw the college's hockey team from the Malaysian Schools Champion tournament.

Dr Mahathir said the Sultan Kelantan should have realised the repercussions of his involvement in his family's politics and repented. "But it seems that the Sultan of Kelantan has not realised or repented," he added. -- Bernama

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