

Prime Minister: No one

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Amendment

issue settled

should dispute validity of Bill

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Government and the people are satisfied that the issue of the constitutional amendments has been settled now that the Bill has received the royal assent, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister also said no one should dispute the validity of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1993.

Responding to reporters' questions on Semangat 46's claim that the party does not recognise the legislation even though the Bill has received the royal assent from the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah, Dr Mahathir said:

"There is nothing to dispute. Semangat 46 has only a few supporters . . . they are a minority, what people sometimes call the lunatic fringe. Such people are found in any society.

"We are very happy and grateful that the issue has been settled peacefully without outside interference and solved in the best possible way," he added.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said the Sultan of Kelantan's repudiation of the consent given to the Bill earlier had no impact since the provisions of the Bill would be enforced once it is gazetted.

He said the Government would not hesitate to take action against any Ruler under the Bill and those who dispute the validity of the legislation would find that the Government was serious about implementing it.

"Whoever disputes it will find out whether we will take action when he commits an offence," he told re-

porters at his Hari Raya open house at Seri Perdana here.

The Bill to remove the personal immunity of the Rulers received royal assent on Monday and is expected to be gazetted at the end of this week, making it law.

It was passed by the Dewan Rakyat on March 9, the Dewan Negara the next day and submitted to the King on March 16.

Asked about the procedures for the Special Court to try errant Rulers, provided for under the Bill, Dr Mahathir said the relevant authorities were working on them.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba said the Government and the people were relieved that the Bill had received the royal assent.

"It is all over as far as the Government and the people are concerned . . . it is in the best interests of everyone, including the Sultan of Kelantan, not to raise doubts about the Bill anymore," he said when speaking to reporters at his Hari Raya open house at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Ghafar said since the King had given his assent, no one should question the Bill.

"The people are happy that the issue is over and this is reflected in the large turnout today," Ghafar said referring to the large crowd at his open house.

He also reminded the people that they should continue to respect the Rulers despite the curtailment of their immunity.

"The people know this and on the Government's part, we will ensure that the provisions of the Bill are strictly enforced," he added