

05 MAY 1996

Pas-Amendments

PAS CENTRAL BODY SUPPORTS AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 5 (Bernama) -- The PAS Central Political Council today gave its full support for the Kelantan State Government proposal to amend the state constitution to limit the powers and immunity of the Kelantan Sultan.

PAS Deputy President Haji Abdul Hadi Awang said the amendment, to be in line with the changes made to the Federal Constitution in 1993, was necessary to ensure effective administration of the state.

The support by the council, the highest policy making body in the party which met in a special session today to discuss the issue, was seen by political observers here as a move to strengthen Kelantan PAS in its action to amend the state constitution, which Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46), its ally in the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (APU), is strongly opposed to.

Speaking to reporters after the council meeting, Abdul Hadi said the Kelantan state government could now proceed to call for a special meeting of the state assembly to table the amendments.

Abdul Hadi had presided over the meeting in the absence of PAS President Haji Fadzil Noor who was in Mecca for the pilgrimage.

Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, who was present, briefed the council on the proposed amendments, which are also aimed at defining clearly the separation of powers between the Sultan and the Menteri Besar.

Others present included Pas secretary-general Haji Abdul Halim Arshad and party treasurer Haji Mustapha Ali.

Abdul Hadi reiterated the earlier statement by Nik Aziz that the question of having discussions with S46 over the issue did not arise.

He also said the council did not discuss the strained relations between Pas and S46, which had arisen chiefly over the issue.

Meanwhile S46 President Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah told reporters at a separate function that he was still hopeful that PAS would discuss the issue with S46 and other affiliates in APU.

"We are not asking for the impossible..a big issue like this one ought to be discussed," he said, adding that even until now S46 had been patient in dealing with PAS regarding the matter.

Razaleigh also said there was no need for him to inform PAS if he wanted to meet Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed for further discussions as it was his party's as well as his own right.

Every citizen has the right to meet the Prime Minister, he said, adding that others who wished to meet Dr Mahathir do not inform S46 about it.

His earlier meeting with Dr Mahathir, which was widely publicised, had apparently brought sharp criticism from PAS leaders, especially Nik Aziz.

Dr Mahathir said this morning that Razaleigh could meet him again if the S46 leader wished to do so. -- BERNAMA

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