

23 APR 1996

Assembly-Postpone

SABAH ASSEMBLY SITTING POSTPONED TO JUNE

KOTA KINABALU, April 23 (Bernama) -- The State Assembly sitting scheduled for Thursday and Friday has been postponed to June 17 and 18, Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Salleh Said Keruak announced today.

He said the state Cabinet decided at a meeting today to postpone the sitting which would have discussed amendments to five state laws aimed at transferring certain powers of the Chief Minister to the Cabinet.

"After studying and analysing the views of Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblymen, we decided it was prudent to delay the tabling of the proposed amendments," he told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

The weekly Cabinet meeting, usually held every Wednesday, was apparently brought forward due to the urgency of the matter as sufficient time was needed to inform assembly members of the postponement.

BN assemblymen had expressed their views on the amendments during a pre-council meeting chaired by Salleh, who is also Sabah BN head, last Sunday.

It was learnt that most of the assemblymen objected to the proposed amendments.

Salleh said the Cabinet unanimously agreed to give time to the assemblymen to go through the various clauses in the amendments.

"I think we can get the amendments passed by the assembly as they need only a simple majority but we want the members to be given sufficient time for discussion," he said.

The opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) had earlier announced that it would oppose the amendments in the assembly.

The five laws proposed for amendment are the Forest Enactment 1968, Land Ordinance (Chapter 68), Mines Ordinance 1960, Sabah Foundation Enactment 1966 and the Delegation of Power Enactment 1963.

The amendments were suggested by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to reduce the powers of the Chief Minister who was said to have absolute power to act in matters involving land, forest and mining.

Salleh said the Cabinet meeting also decided to form committee headed by Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Ghapur Salleh to gather the views of all BN assemblymen on various aspects of the proposed amendments.

Other state ministers in the committee are Datuk Tham Nyip Shen (Industrial Development), Datuk Yahya Hussain (Rural Development), Datuk Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia (Agriculture and Fisheries) and Datuk Wilfred Bumburing (Culture, Youth and Sports). State Attorney-General Datuk Stephen Foo is also a member.

Salleh said he would convey to Dr Mahathir the wishes of the assemblymen and the decision of the Cabinet when he returned from overseas.

He said although the amendments might be modified slightly, its principle and spirit would be retained to strengthen the cabinet system. --

BERNAMA

OPP CTL