

BN reps reject constitutional amendment
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The BN has rejected a proposed amendment to the Selangor constitution tabled by the Pakatan Rakyat government of Selangor at today's special sitting of the state legislative assembly because "it is ultra vires the federal constitution".

"Today's sitting of the assembly is a futile effort and a waste of time," said Selangor Opposition leader Mohamad Satim Diman during the debate on the Selangor State Constitution Enactment (Second Part) (Amendment) 2011 Bill.

He was explaining why all the 21 BN assemblypersons were against the proposed amendment tabled by Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim which, among other things, seeks to "restore the powers of the sultan of Selangor and the menteri besar" in the appointment of the state secretary, state financial officer and state legal advisor.

(Badrul Hisham Abdullah, whose Port Klang seat has been declared vacant, was prohibited from attending today's sitting of the assembly.)

The amendment to the state constitution was proposed following the appointment of Mohd Khusrin Munawi as the state secretary effective Jan 1 by the Public Service Commission. The appointment was disputed by the state government because the menteri besar was purportedly not consulted.

Mohamad Satim said the proposed amendment was politically motivated and portrayed the hypocrisy and insincerity of the Selangor government.

He said the BN, during its administration of Selangor, had never neglected or ignored the sultan of Selangor.

On the appointment of Mohd Khusrin as the state secretary, he said Abdul Khalid himself had not accepted the appointment when Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah had given his consent.

"This can be regarded as treason," he said.

Mohamad Satim said the appointment of Mohd Khusrin as the state secretary was not an issue so major that it could trigger an emergency situation, so much so that it necessitated an amendment to the state constitution.

He said the menteri besar was aware that the proposed amendment would not be approved because it would not obtain the necessary two-third majority from the house, but he insisted on tabling the bill.

"Is that not something futile, a waste of time and a drain on government funds? I want to ask how much was spent to engage the two private legal advisors who prepared the bill.

"Why was the task not given to the Selangor legal advisor whose appointment has been consented to by the Sultan of Selangor?" he said.

Mohamad Satim criticised the Selangor government which he said claimed to want to restore powers to the sultan with the amendment when, in the first place, it did not give the sultan full powers in the appointment of the state secretary.

According to the proposed amendment, he said, the role of the sultan was confined to "acting in accordance with the advice of the menteri besar".

Mohamad Satim said that if the state government was sincere in wanting to restore the powers of the sultan, it should have proposed an amendment from the legal and execution of powers aspect.

"The Selangor government may probably say that that is contrary to the federal constitution, but is the present proposed amendment not opposed to the federal constitution?" he said.

Mohamad Satim said the menteri besar was suspicious of Mohamed Khusrin who should have been rightly given the opportunity to discharge his duties and, if found to be inefficient or ineffective, transferred out.

He also said that the 1993 amendments to the federal constitution pertaining to certain powers of the rulers were approved by Parliament with more than a two-third majority, with 167 MPs voting for, six abstaining and none voting against.

"Among those who voted for the amendments was current Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (then the MP for Permatang Pauh from the BN). This shows that all quarters, including the opposition parties, agreed to the amendments.

"Therefore, it is unnecessary for the menteri besar, who was then chief executive officer of Permodalan Nasional Berhad, to pick on the historic event with the intention to politicise this proposed amendment," he said.

Speaking to reporters during a break in the sitting, Mohamad Satim said the menteri besar's speech at the tabling of the bill touched more on criticism of Umno, including former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, than on the amendment itself.

He said the Selangor government attempted to twist the facts pertaining to the constitutional amendments of 1993 by stating that it was a move by the BN to restrict the powers of the rulers when it was actually to strengthen the institution of the monarchy under the system of parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy practised in the country.

"At that time (in 1993) it was vital to strengthen the institution of the monarchy and the constitutional amendments of that year were the determinant factor in strengthening the institution of the monarchy up to today," he said.

- Bernama