

Bipartisan push to return parliamentary independence
MalaysiaKini.com
April 30, 2012
By Hazlan Zakaria

Representatives from the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara have sent a proposal to the government to re-establish the Parliamentary Services Act 1963 (PSA).

malaysia parliament parlimen building 050907 frontThe move - which was aimed at returning operational independence to the country's legislature - included input from the opposition and was the result of over one year of discussions, Dewan Negara president Abu Sahar Anika Ujang said today.

Abu Sahar said this to reporters after receiving a delegation from the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (Ideas), who sent in a set of proposals for the uplifting of the upper house of Parliament.

While he did not disclose details of the proposal, Abu Zahar said he and the Dewan Rakyat speaker have a copy of it, and that it has been forwarded to de facto Law Minister Nazri Abdul Azizi, the federal minister in charge of parliamentary affairs.

"Re-establishing the Parliamentary Services Act 1963 was suggested by (Kemaman MP) Sabri Cheek and supported by (Johor Baru MP) Shahrir Samad.

"This was taken into consideration by both Houses a few years ago and was endorsed by Nazri. We are looking into matter seriously.

"A committee was set up, discussed the matter for almost one year and a paper is now being presented. The committee is made up of not only government members but also from the opposition, to show that the government is quite open to whatever that is good."

Act repealed during Mahathir's regime

Abu Sahar said this when asked about efforts to re-introduce the PSA, as announced by deputy speaker Wan Junaidy Jaafar in September last year.

Ideas founding president Tunku 'Abidin Tunku Mukriz, who was also at the press conference applauded the move as "timely".

Tunku 'Abidin that in his discussions with Abu Sahar and other senators present when he sent in proposals from Ideas for the return of operational independence to Parliament, those present were in unanimous agreement about the independence of Parliament.

The Act, which provides for Parliament to run its own administration and hence ensure a separation of powers, was repealed in 1992 under former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership.

The repeal of the PSA was seen by many to be a blow to parliamentary independence, as the legislature would be hamstrung without the federal government assigning staff and funding to it.

