

## **Rulers conclude meeting over cabinet's emergency proposal**

**Malaysiakini**

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Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah and other Malay rulers have concluded their special meeting at Istana Negara today.

The meeting was called after Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Friday met with the monarch to propose, among others, a state of emergency to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

The meeting of the rulers today was intended to help guide the king on whether he should accede to Muhyiddin's request.

Proponents have said a state of emergency is needed to fight Covid-19 while critics claimed Muhyiddin is trying to cling on to power amid a fragile majority and the threat of defections among MPs.

The meeting, which started at 2.30pm today, concluded at around 5pm, according to Bernama.

Johor ruler Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar was the first to depart Istana Negara following the meeting, at 5.13pm.

The last to leave was Perak ruler Sultan Nazrin Shah at 5.57pm.

However, Kelantan ruler Sultan Muhammad V was notably absent.

An announcement is expected following the meeting.

The rulers had arrived as early as noon today.

The official car carrying the Agong was seen entering Istana Negara at 12.20pm today.

Reporters from the local and international media were gathered outside the main entrance of Istana Negara.

Police took necessary measures to provide tight security and ensured that media personnel observed the Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP) such as wearing face masks and maintaining physical distancing.

Journalists were required to scan the MySejahtera QR Code and have their body

temperature taken and are given a special sticker.

The police set up barriers and traffic cones and enforced security control along the road leading to the main entrance of the palace.

Previously, the palace confirmed that the meeting would take place at Istana Negara but did not go into the details of the proposals.

"(The rulers) will discuss and refine the proposals presented by Muhyiddin," said Comptroller of the Royal Household Ahmad Fadil Shamsuddin yesterday.

Malaysiakini spoke to several constitutional and legal experts and found that the monarch has at least two options when he finally has to make a decision.

The king can either accept any proposals presented by Muhyiddin or advise the cabinet to come up with other options.

However, the experts are at odds on how much autonomy the Agong has in deciding whether or not to declare an emergency.

It is not clear as of yet the scope or shape of any "emergency" declaration by the government. On the surface, it is reportedly an effort to combat the Covid-19

pandemic.

However, there is rife speculation that this is a political move to prevent the government's Budget 2021 from being defeated in the Dewan Rakyat next month.

Muhyiddin's Perikatan Nasional government currently has a slim two-seat majority - which is under threat from political manoeuvres by Umno and PKR.

Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi previously claimed that "many" of his party's MPs are currently backing PKR president Anwar Ibrahim to be prime minister.

Separately, Umno's Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah appeared to be pursuing a vote of no-confidence against the prime minister.

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