

Bill to be tabled in July

PM assures no delay to have anti-hopping law in place

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Assuring there is no intention to delay or not even table the law on anti-hopping, the Prime Minister is targeting for the Bill to be brought to Parliament during the July meeting.

Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said a special committee comprising representatives from the government and Opposition would be tasked to draw up the law, and constitutional experts would be roped in for their views.

"It is not the intention of the government to delay the tabling of the law.

"This perception is the work of certain parties or groups wanting to confuse the people as if the government is not sincere to have the law in place," he said after a briefing session with lawmakers and Dewan Negara members ahead of the tabling of the constitutional amendment in Parliament today.

The special sitting of the Dewan Rakyat to table and debate the Constitution (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 2022 will take place today and a special sitting of the Dewan Negara will be held tomorrow.

The tabling and debate will involve the enactment clause under Article 10 of the Federal Constitution to allow a new law prohibiting MPs from switching parties.

Ismail Sabri said the special committee would also look at how views from lawmakers could be included in the proposed anti-hopping law.

He said many had voiced their disagreement that being expelled from a political party be included in the anti-hopping law.

"Issues on mergers of political parties were also raised by lawmakers.

"So the committee will have to look at all these details.

"We have set a target for the anti-hopping Bill to be tabled during Parliament's July meeting but it depends on how fast the committee can work," he said.

He also allayed concerns that the amendment to Article 10 of the Federal Constitution would affect an individual's freedom of association.

Ismail Sabri explained that the amendment would only involve political parties and their lawmakers at the Dewan Rakyat and state assemblies.

"The law is very focused and clear and only

involves political parties," he said.

He said there were also suggestions that members of the Senate should also be governed when it comes to party hopping, adding this was agreed in principal and would be included later in the law.

"If the Dewan Rakyat Speaker agrees for the clause (involving Dewan Negara members) to be inserted during committee level, we will do it tomorrow," he said.

On why Opposition lawmakers did not attend the briefing, the Prime Minister said they had their pre-council meeting, as per the usual practice before Parliament meets.

"No, they are not boycotting. I have been informed of this," he added.

Four Opposition MPs - Ipoh Timur, Bandar Kuching, Labuan and Kalabakan - attended the briefing.

Ismail Sabri said today's special sitting would see Article 10 of the Federal Constitution be amended, which is a necessary move before the anti-hopping law can be put in place.

"From statements I have read, all parties had said they will support it. I hope there will be no issue of the amendment not being passed," he said.