

# PM term cap must meet strong oversight, say experts

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**PETALING JAYA:** Capping the prime minister's tenure at two terms or 10 years paves the way for leadership renewal and policy discipline, according to political observers and anti-graft groups.

This reform, however, must be reinforced by strong institutions, independent oversight bodies and safeguards against executive overreach, or it risks being merely symbolic.

Universiti Sains Malaysia political sociologist Prof Datuk Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said a fixed two-term limit would encourage clearer prioritisation, discipline and delivery of

reforms within a defined time-frame.

"However, it could reduce policy continuity unless accompanied by strong institutional frameworks and bipartisan consensus on major national policies," he said when contacted yesterday.

He added that political resistance from entrenched interests and concerns over leadership continuity, could pose challenges when the proposed law is tabled for Parliament's approval.

"Public support for accountability and reform can, however, place pressure on both government and opposition members to endorse it," he said.

Political scientist Prof Wong Chin Huat said capping the prime

minister's tenure will limit power abuse, personality cult and dynastic politics.

He added that it would also compel the prime minister to maximise achievements within the tenure limit, while allowing for generational renewal and the rejuvenation of national leadership.

The reforms, he added, are also good for the opposition and every politician who is not the prime minister.

"The opposition has no reason to oppose this unless they are 100% certain that they and their preferred prime minister candidate will win the next general election," said Prof Wong of Sunway University.

According to him, the govern-

ment must clearly explain to the people the political cost of opposing these reforms.

"The government can also court opposition support by pairing this with equitable constituency development funds for all MPs," he said.

Anti-graft groups said that this reform will only be meaningful if it forms part of broader reforms.

"On its own, the reform cannot correct structural weaknesses in oversight, enforcement, or political financing," says Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) president Raymon Ram.

"The core issue at stake is not merely how long a Prime Minister serves, but whether executive power is consistently constrained by strong, independent institu-

tions throughout that tenure," he added.

He said the two-term limit must be accompanied by other reforms, such as the separation of the powers of the Attorney-General, political financing and other measures.

Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) chief executive officer Pushpan Murugiah said the two-term limit discourages the formation of crony networks and reduces the likelihood of the business-political nexus becoming too closely intertwined.

He added that advanced democracies worldwide have also adopted such measures to curtail the consolidation of power in individuals while limiting the potential for abuse.