



Ismail holds opposition MPs to their promise of support

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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob is banking on opposition support in the Dewan Rakyat tomorrow to pass a constitutional amendment that will pave the way for an anti-hopping law.

Speaking to reporters after a briefing for MPs on the proposed amendment, he expressed confidence that the Constitution (Amendment) Bill (No.3) 2022 will be approved by the House.

The bill must receive a minimum of 148 votes, or a two-third majority, to be passed.

"As of today, from the media statements we've been reading, the government parties are all backing it. The opposition, Pakatan Harapan, have also pledged their support," he was quoted as saying.

"As such, I feel there is no issue here about the amendments not being approved. I hope what had been promised will be honoured tomorrow," Bernama reported.

The anti-hopping bill will seek to penalise MPs and assembly members who switch parties after being elected. It is among a package of reforms agreed to by Ismail's government in return for an opposition pledge not to cause his government to fall.

Ismail said the government hoped to table the anti-hopping bill at the next parliamentary sitting in July and had no intention of delaying or not tabling the bill as alleged by critics.

"There are confused parties who are trying to play up the issue as though the government is not sincere in matters concerning the tabling of the anti-party hopping bill," he said.

Also present were minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar and Attorney-General Idrus Harun.

Once the constitutional amendment was approved, a bipartisan committee that includes academicians would draft the new law.

"I hope this matter can be expedited as the government's target is to table this law during the parliamentary meeting in July," he said.

Several MPs, Cabinet ministers and senators attended the briefing today.

Opposition MPs Wong Kah Woh and Dr Kelvin Yii of DAP and Ma'mun Sulaiman and Rozman Isli of Warisan were among those at the briefing.

"I was made to understand (the rest) were attending a pre-council meeting (elsewhere)," Ismail said. "Today is like any other day where there is a pre-council meeting before a (parliamentary) sitting. Today although the focus is on a single matter, it is akin to a pre-council meeting as well," he said.

Among the ministers present were Takiyuddin Hassan (energy and natural resources), Reezal Merican Naina Merican (housing and local government) M Saravanan (human resources), Hishammuddin Hussein (defence), Radzi Jidin (education), Nancy Shukri (tourism, arts and culture), Adham Baba (science and technology), senator Idris Ahmad (minister for religious affairs) and senator Ras Adiba Radzi.