

20/11/1997

Kit Siang's bid to make amendments rejection

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Dewan Rakyat today rejected a motion by opposition leader Lim Kit Siang to amend the motion in support of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad by deleting several sections which pledged undivided support for Dr Mahathir.

Deputy Speaker Datuk Juhar Mahiruddin announced that the motion was rejected after a voice-vote was taken.

He said the majority of the MPs present rejected Lim's motion.

Lim when tabling the motion to amend the motion of confidence tabled by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said the DAP strongly objected to the interference by outsiders such as the 34 US congressmen, in the internal affairs of Malaysia.

He said the DAP's position was very clear right from the onset - that the party would give full support to Dr Mahathir if there was an international conspiracy to force him to resign, as that decision rested solely with Malaysians.

There was a heated exchange of words and even thumping of tables between Brisan Nasional and DAP MPs when Datuk Sukri Mohamed (BN-Machang) said the motion to amend the original confidence motion should be rejected from the start.

He said this was because the Standing Orders stated there should not be two motions on the same day related to the same issue - confidence in the leadership of Dr Mahathir.

Juhar ruled that Lim's motion could be tabled and debated, and it was up to the House to decide on whether to accept or reject it.

When Sukri persisted and urged the Speaker to reject Lim's motion, Lim stood up and asked Juhar to send Sukri out of the House for disrespecting the ruling made by the Deputy Speaker.

Sukri instead asked that Lim be sent out of the House.

Lim in debating the contents of the motion said it should be separated into three different motions as it was related to three different issues.

He said the DAP supported the sections in the confidence motions which strongly rejected outside interference in the domestic affairs of the country and the joint-venture investment undertaken by Malaysia in Iran.

"But we cannot support blindly the motion of confidence in the leadership of Dr Mahathir because the country was now faced with multiple crises.

"The stock markets are faring very badly which does not speak well for the Malaysian economy, and the value of the Ringgit had depreciated over the past few months," he said.

Lim said in view of the fact that the country was faced with these crises, there was an urgent need for a separate and full debate on a confidence motion in the Prime Minister on his stewardship of the country.

He said this was particularly the case today when the country was plunged into a new crisis of confidence which would destroy whatever residue of confidence investors, both local and international, still had in the Malaysian financial markets.

"This is caused by United Engineers (M) Bhd's surprise RM2.4 billion bail-out of Renong Berhad to the detriment of UEM minority shareholders which has created a new crisis in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange by plunging a very volatile investor confidence in Malaysia, to a new low because of acute lack of transparency.

"Yesterday (Tuesday) the KLSE composite index fell to a new five-year low of 622.09 points, down 45.2 points which is a drop of 6.8 per cent in one day.

"Bearing the brunt was UEM whose shares tumbled 38 per cent to RM3.86, its lowest level since February 1993.

"It broke the 30 per cent limit down in about one and a half hours, falling from RM6.25 to RM4.38 per share," he said.

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