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Parliament-Kit Siang

LIM FAILS IN BID TO TABLE MOTION ON JUDICIARY

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 (Bernama) -- Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang today failed in his bid to table a motion in the Dewan Rakyat to discuss what he termed as the latest crisis of the judiciary.

Deputy Speaker Datuk Juhar Mahiruddin felt there was no urgency to discuss the motion.

"I agreed that the motion is specific in nature and in the interest of the public. But, I feel there is no urgency to discuss it...I therefore reject the motion," he said.

Lim (DAP-Tanjong), in tabling the motion, said the House need to discuss the matter following interference by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the appeal case of Kota Melaka MP Lim Guan Eng.

Dr Mahathir, he said had commented on the jail term imposed by the Court of Appeal, making it difficult for the Federal Court to act in a fair and independent manner when hearing the appeal by Guan Eng later.

Guan Eng was jailed 36 months when he lost his appeal against two counts of maliciously publishing false information and sedition.

In substituting two fines of RM10,000 and RM5,000 with the jail term, the Court of Appeal said the offences were too serious for only a fine to be imposed as "the judiciary's credibility was attacked."

Guan Eng was fined RM10,000 for maliciously printing false information in January 1995 in a pamphlet entitled Kisah Benar. He was fined another RM5,000 under the Sedition Act 1948 for inciting the public that Malaysia practised double standards in a forum at the Emperor Hotel in Melaka on Jan 19, 1995.

Dr Mahathir was reported to have said that whenever an opposition politician was found guilty, the sentence given out was light.

"Being the most important person to decide on all judicial appointments and promotions, the Prime Minister's public opinion on pending cases would place all judges in the invidious position of going against the Prime Minister and incurring his displeasure," Lim said.

"What chance is there for Guan Eng in getting a fair and independent appeal hearing at the Federal Court," he asked.

Guan Eng has filed an appeal at the Federal Court against the jail sentence. --BERNAMA

RAZ ABG