

26 OCT 1998  
Parliament-Debate (Opposition)  
DAP DOESN'T WANT MOB RULE IN MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Tanjung) today supported the views of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Malaysia does not want mob rule.

"I agree with the views of the Prime Minister that we don't want mob rule in Malaysia.

"Malaysians will use the ballot box to demand for political change and not the Indonesian way of resorting to street violence," he said when debating the Supply Bill 1999 in the Dewan Rakyat.

In tabling the National Budget 1999 last Friday, Dr Mahathir condemned mob rule, saying that Malaysia is a democratic country, practising the rule of law.

Lim said the DAP regretted last Saturday's outbreak of violence in Kuala Lumpur and wanted a peaceful solution "in meeting political demand for more room for democracy to respect the people's freedom of speech and the right to hold gathering."

"While the government and the police need to acknowledge the people's right to take part in peaceful gathering to express their fear and aspirations...every Malaysian must realise that there's a need to maintain high discipline to safeguard public order and law, something fragile in a multi-racial society like ours," he said.

Lim, the first to speak on the budget, took almost two hours to present his views on political development in the country, Dr Mahathir's appointment as First Finance Minister, capital control measures and the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

He said Malaysia was facing serious political crisis which hampered efforts towards economic recovery.

Lim proposed two ways to resolve the political crisis, that is for Dr Mahathir to dissolve Parliament and hold an earlier general election.

If the general election could not be held, he said Dr Mahathir should take the initiative to hold All Parties/Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Roundtable Conference to resolve issues on integrity and independence of the judiciary and police, press freedom, freedom of speech, freedom to attend gathering and freedom to distribute information.

On capital controls measures, Lim said it was too early to make any conclusion as initial signs showed that the Malaysian share market was not that encouraging although that of Southeast Asia had rebounded since early this month.

"The Finance Minister in his winding-up should give his response to the reservation on effect of capital controls measures over the local bourse," katanya.

He said the opportunity provided by capital controls was also not utilised to the full to carry out structural reform in economy and finance as none was ever mentioned in the Budget 1999 on the fight against corruption and cronyism.

"The government has failed to observe transparency regulations proposed by the National Economic Recovery Plan (NERP) of the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) in the RM10.5 billion bail-out proposal of Renong, a RM1.1 billion attempt to bail out Bank Bumiputra, (the third in 12 years)," he said.

He said total transparency should be observed in all bail-out attempts by the government in line with NERP proposals to avoid adverse effect on

confidence of the public as well as investors.

Lim said the government should not use fiscal expenditures of the deficit budget to rescue its cronies by implementing prestigious infrastructure projects but on the other hand to focus on projects which benefited ordinary people directly.

On MSC, Lim wanted the government to announce responding organisations (RO) which won tenders for information technology projects to enable the people to know new technology which would have an effect on their lives.

Meanwhile, Haji Abdul Hadi Awang (PAS-Marang) in his speech called for the abolition of the Internal Security Act (ISA), saying it is outdated and giving the impression that the country is still facing emergency.

The Act could also be abused to protect position of certain individuals, he said.

He said the ceramah sessions organised by Malaysian Peoples Justice Movement Council (Gerak) showed that it practised true democracy.

"Ceramah sessions could avoid demonstrations," he said.

Abdul Hadi also suggested that Bank Islam be given more freedom to develop the Islamic financial system.

The government should realise that "riba" (interest) practised in international financial system served as an effective weapon to bring down the economy of a country, he said.

As such, he said the government must be firm in opposing `riba' in local financial institutions.

--BERNAMA

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