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Parliament-Debate

TALK OF ELECTION AFFECTS MPs ENTHUSIASM IN DEBATE

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Talk of imminent dissolution of Parliament today seemed to have affected members' enthusiasm in taking part in the current Dewan Rakyat debate on the federal budget for next year.

Members were visibly opting to gather at the lobby rather than inside the House which started its daily business at 10 am.

Even well before today's sitting commenced, government and opposition back-benchers sought confirmation from journalists about the impending dissolution of Parliament.

"I'm not surprised in Parliament is dissolved today," Mohamad Sabu (PAS-Kubang Kerian) told reporters who approached him at the lobby.

"I'm over," said a smiling Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (BN-Bagan Datoh) as he entered the House.

Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) was the first member to take the floor today and began his debate expressing thanks, adding: "This may be the last time I address the House."

"Yes, the last time indeed," came the volunteered reply from government back-benchers.

In his debate Tan proposed that the governing Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition hold a dialogue with the four-party opposition alliance calling itself the alternative front to ensure that the coming general election will be the cleanest in the country's history.

Tan, who is also DAP vice-chairman, said he made the suggestion in the light of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressing fears that the coming general election could be the "dirtiest and full of trickeries".

"As such I ask of the prime minister, as a statesman, to ensure that the general election this time around is the cleanest," Tan said debating the Supply Bill 2000.

Tan said that towards that end, as prime minister, Dr Mahathir has the capability and ample machinery.

"I therefore ask of the prime minister to ensure that everything (election preparations) is very well done as he has ample capability," Tan said.

Such an assurance by the prime minister would also exemplify the BN's spirit of tolerance, Tan added.

In his debate, Chang See Ten (BN-Gelang Patah) criticised local authorities for implementing and enforcing differing policies and rules according to areas.

"Enforcement is so glaringly inconsistent as if the country is made of geographically, politically and socio-economically different parts," he said.

Chang proposed that local authorities simplify their rules and laws for smooth administration of the various matters.

For instance, he added, local governments in the various states could standardise the issuance of business licences.

The current parliament will be formally dissolved tomorrow to pave way for the country's 10th general election.

-- BERNAMA

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