

04/04/2001

Opposition fails in bid to defer tabling of OPP

THE Opposition failed in its bid to defer the tabling of the Third Outline Perspective Plan by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Deputy Speaker Datuk Lim Si Cheng had just invited Dr Mahathir to table the plan when Opposition Leader Datuk Fadzil Noor stood up and objected to it.

He said the tabling should be deferred to next week to allow MPs more time to study the plan, arguing it was only distributed to them on Monday.

Lim, however, overruled Fadzil, saying there was no provision stating that such an arrangement had to be observed.

"MPs will be given time to debate the matter. Therefore, the suggestion for the plan to be tabled later is rejected," he said.

This did not go down well with the Opposition bench who started to protest and prevented the Prime Minister from beginning his speech. They included Mohamad Sabu (Pas-Kuala Kedah), Mahfuz Omar (Pas-Pokok Sena), Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) and Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka).

Parit Buntar MP Datuk Dr Hassan Ali (Pas) questioned how MPs were going to debate on the plan with such short notice, adding MPs could not just rubber-stamp it.

This prompted Dr Mahathir to say: "For MPs who wanted to defer, they can do so by not taking part in the debate."

Lim had a tough time bringing order to the House with the Opposition MPs refusing to sit down and continued to argue their case. The backbenchers joined in and before long, a shouting match started.

After 10 minutes of delay, Dr Mahathir resumed his speech.

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