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Parliament-Proton

DEWAN RAKYAT DENIES MOTION TO DISCUSS PROTON ISSUE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 (Bernama) -- Dewan Rakyat today denied an extraordinary motion moved by Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timur) to discuss Proton Chief Executive Officer Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff's criticisms of the government's automotive policy.

Dewan Rakyat Speaker, Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said although the motion was on a matter of public interest, it had to be rejected given that the issue was not urgent.

"I am rejecting the proposal according to 18 (2) rules. In my opinion, it is not urgent as the Proton issue has been raised, and a full reply given in the Dewan Rakyat on March 21 to April 23 and June 20 to July 6, with nine oral and seven written questions on the automotive industry," he told the House here.

Ramli said on the issue of Approved Permits (APs), four questions were answered and the matter was also explained in reply to M. Kula Segaran (DAP-Ipoh Barat) in the Dewan Rakyat on July 5.

He said the government would still have to ensure Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd (Proton)'s survival and its position as the national car so that it remains competitive.

"In fulfilling its commitment, the government took into consideration Proton's ability to compete and enhance its quality of production," he said.

Yesterday, Lim submitted a motion to Ramli to hold an emergency debate on the Proton crisis.

He said there was a need for the motion to be allowed as it was urgent, definite and of public importance due to the serious allegations filed by Tengku Mahaleel and later backed by Proton advisor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The controversy arose after Tengku Mahaleel in an interview with Oriental Daily, a Chinese language newspaper last Friday, said among other things that Proton was being treated unfairly by the government under a policy that was not transparent and discriminatory.

On Tuesday, Dr Mahathir, the brainchild behind the 20-year old Proton, questioned the way Approved Permits (APs) were issued now whereby there were several categories of APs, including for specially-tuned up cars.

" I'm surprised that of the 67,000 APs issued last year, only 12,600 were given to 82 companies while 54,400 APs were given to 20 companies.

" This is not in the spirit of nurturing Bumiputera entrepreneurship whereby it (APs issuance) should benefit a big number of people rather than be concentrated on a few," said the former prime minister.

--BERNAMA

MUN SS