

Motion to debate remarks at Umno assembly rejected

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LAST week's Umno assembly continued to dominate House proceedings as the Opposition tried to table a motion to debate the inflammatory remarks made by some delegates.

However, Speaker Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib rejected Lim Kit Siang's (DAP-Ipoh Timur) motion on the grounds that it was not urgent as Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also prime minister, had addressed the issue while replying to points raised during the Umno debates.

Ramli said in Abdullah's winding-up speech, the Umno president had clearly explained his policies.

"He also gave the assurance that the rights of all citizens, as enshrined in the Constitution, would not be affected.

"Additionally, he had stated his determination to serve the people effectively and fairly," he said.

If Ramli had allowed Lim's motion, the House would have set aside one hour to debate the events at the Umno assembly.

The Opposition would have been given half an hour to say its piece and the government would also have been given the same amount of time to rebut.

Earlier, when tabling the motion, Lim said that the recent five-day Umno assembly was the worst manifestation of the rising polemics on religion and race, which was negative and divisive.



■ Reports by V. Vasudevan, Eileen Ng and June Ramli

Lim said the assembly had affected national unity and scared off foreign investors.

Later, at a Press conference, he called on Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail to use the sedition law to prosecute people who raised the spectre of May 13.

He said three police reports had been lodged so far in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Perak in connection with the threat and the seditious speeches at the assembly.

Lim said that instead of making insensitive, extreme and seditious speeches, Malaysians should focus on how to attract more foreign direct investments, restore the quality of the country's education and eradicate poverty.