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12th M'sia Plan delayed till next year for various reasons, says Minister

THE tabling of the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK-12) was put off to early next year due to changes in the Federal administration and national economic landscape, the House was told.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economic Affairs) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said these led to a review of the country's economic policies.

"The Perikatan Nasional Cabinet was only formed in March, the ministers are also new and the ministries were restructured.

"The vision of Perikatan is also different from that of the previous administration.

"A few policies and methods in handling the economy have to be reviewed to suit the current economic situation," he said in reply to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (PH-Port Dickson) on the delayed tabling of RMK-12, which was originally scheduled to be tabled tomorrow.

Mustapa said the economic landscape of the country and the world has changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the digital economy now playing a bigger role.

The tourism industry and SMEs will need more time to recover, and food security will need to be given more attention, he added.

"The fiscal position of the country is also a challenge, and the initial fiscal deficit forecast of 3.2% (of GDP) is expected to increase to about 5.8% to 6% in 2020.

"If RMK-12 is tabled (on Thursday), it is certain that some assumptions will not be realistic.

Malaysia is not the only one facing this challenge, the whole world is facing the same problem," he said.

Mustapa assured that although RMK-12 has been postponed, it will still be based on the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 announced last October.

Anwar, however, said the reasons given by the government to postpone the tabling of RMK-12 were 'trivial', saying that the economic stimulus packages must be debated in Parliament.

"Malaysia is one of the countries where the stimulus package was not debated.

"The reason given by the Prime Minister was that he did not want to delay implementation.

"We have explained that the implementation will not necessarily be delayed, but we must have the matter debated in Parliament," he said.

To this, Mustapa said the RMK-12 can be debated next year.

"RMK-12 will be tabled and there is plenty of opportunity to debate the matter.

"Moreover, the implementation for RMK-12 is for the year 2021, so even if we table it on Aug 6 (this year), the time has not arrived yet," he said.

Mustapa said engagement sessions on RMK-12 with parliamentarians, think-tanks and state governments were ongoing.