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Opposition leader's persistence annoys Barisan MPs

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PARLIAMENTARY Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang incurred the annoyance of Barisan Nasional MPs when he persistently tried to raise the issue concerning Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim when debating amendments to the Securities Industry (Central Depositories) Act 1991.

Anwar, the former Deputy Prime Minister, was charged in the Sessions Court with five counts of corrupt practices and four counts of unnatural sex yesterday.

Lim (DAP-Tanjung) touched on Anwar's arrest several times and claimed that an injustice had been committed.

This resulted in an exchange of words between him and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was seated directly opposite.

Lim was eventually barred by Speaker Ong Tee Keat from continuing to deviate from the main topic of the debate.

Earlier, Lim expressed dissatisfaction with the short time given to MPs to study the five Bills tabled.

Supported by Karpal Singh (DAP-Jelutong), he called on Dr Mahathir to adjourn the House temporarily.

Following is the excerpt of the verbal exchanges between Lim and Dr Mahathir:

Lim: I would like to ask why the MPs were not given sufficient time to study the Bills. How many MPs dare to say that they had received the Bills earlier than today?

Nobody dares to say that he had received the Bills. There is no fairplay when Dr Mahathir rejected the request from the MP for Jelutong, Karpal Singh. We are merely ramming the Bills through.

No doubt the Standing Orders allow the Bills to be carried through the three stages on the same sitting. There is also Standing Orders to suspend the proceedings and debate.

There must be "Rule of law" and not "Rule by law". Rule of law means there must be justice and fair play.

But this was not the case in the arrest of Anwar. There must be the spirit of justice but that was missing. That is why we want a debate on these Bills and that more time be allowed.

If not, the House would become a mere rubber stamp. Is this the standard of debate? I hope the Prime Minister could study this and allow more time.

Dr Mahathir: He (Kit Siang) talked on the "Rule by law" and "Rule of law" but his party was involved in demonstrations. The party had also taken disciplinary actions against those challenging the leadership.

Is this the kind of spirit of the "Rule of law" propagated by the DAP? The DAP had demonstrated and even exposed the country as bad to other countries in cohort with the foreign media and provided false information. This is the kind of DAP's spirit of nationalism.

Kit Siang: Dr Mahathir has alleged that the DAP had abused the Standing Orders. The DAP and Pas have raised substantive motions to adjourn the House for debate but these have been turned down.

Dr Mahathir: I am shocked! Kit Siang has now even become a spokesman for Pas.

On the motions tabled by the Opposition, they did not contain substantive arguments but merely opposing. If they want to oppose, just say so, there is no need to table private member's motion.

These are all determined by the Speaker, whom you sometimes fail to

accord the due respect.

This is between the Speaker and you (Kit Siang). If the Speaker turned down the motion, what can we do?

Kit Siang: Dr Mahathir is manipulative. He (Dr Mahathir) is illogical.

He (Dr Mahathir) says there is no need to debate because there is no point but how do you know if there is no debate?

Dr Mahathir said DAP was involved in demonstration in support of Anwar. DAP was never involved. You must show proof.

The way Anwar was sacked and his arrest was not fair. There was no need to send commandos, wearing ski masks to Anwar's house which appeared to be like a terrorist hideout. But until now (at that moment), Anwar has not been charged. Perhaps this morning. Why so long?.

Dr Mahathir: You (Kit Siang) should know that when we tried to take Anwar to court, there were threats of riots. The police have to ensure a peaceful environment.

Regarding the ski-masks, other law enforcement authorities in Britain and Korea use them but I do not hear the DAP making any complaint.

Perhaps whatever the foreigners do are correct and that we cannot do the same thing here.

These are the people who support the foreigners ... there is no nationalism at all. It is also difficult for us to accept that the DAP was not involved as we see its leaders involved.

This is like "I support your son when he is arrested and you support me when I am arrested". Something like quid pro quo ... this is their tactic.

These are things they are doing now ... to change the laws, demonstrating. If you want to change the law, come here (Dewan Rakyat). Or if you can't, then contest during the general elections but do not stage demonstrations.

Kit Siang: Why is ISA used against Anwar? It has been already been four weeks and yet he has not been charged. His wife and children were not allowed to see him. Don't we ought to be a bit humanitarian?

Dr Mahathir: We know that after he was sacked, Anwar held illegal rallies. The police would have arrested him earlier but did not do so until he incited his supporters to riot. Now the laws will take its course but there were threats that disturbances would occur when he is brought to court.

His aim is to see something like Indonesia happen here where shops and houses were burnt and looting occurred, leading to its president resigning. Anwar hopes the same thing will happen here. Then, he will not be tried and his offences will not be revealed. This is his approach. The Government cannot detain him much longer (without pressing charges) as we want to bring him to court.

In the world, there were many deputy prime ministers and ministers who got sacked or dropped without much problem. In Umno also, there are ministers who were dropped but they remained as members.

But Anwar created trouble, riots, wanting to set up new party and reformation movement when he was expelled from Umno. What reformation? When he was in power, he did not carry out any reform.

The DAP always spoke about justice but when other members in the party were arrested, Lim did not make any noise. But when his son was sentenced, suddenly he is calling for reform and justice.

He is only trying to twist the facts. He is using the Dewan Rakyat to pursue his personal interest and those of his family but not the party. Nepotism found in Malaysia was best seen practised in the DAP when he used the party to defend his son. It was extreme nepotism.

Kit Siang: I am not defending Anwar but want justice done. You say that Anwar had gone to Masjid Negara and told his supporters to riot. If it is

true, he should be brought to court for it, as inciting riot is a serious offence. Is this true, as through my recollection of the events, I cannot recall anything pointing to Anwar urging the people to riot. It is not fair for the PM to accuse anybody without proof, and he should retract his statement.

Dr Mahathir: I am not going to retract it. I admit that Anwar did not specifically ask his supporters to riot, go to PWTC and destroy the UMNO exhibits or march to Sri Perdana and burn it down.

But there is a way ... when he speaks, his intention is to incite the people, to sow hatred against someone. As a good orator and former student leader, he knows how to incite the people and students, he knows the things he says will lead to riots.

He also knows about the laws (on inciting people) so he does not instruct people to riot but the effect from his inflammatory speeches will be the same. This is the same like urging people to riot. Before this, they have never done this, like marching to PWTC and my residence. But the message conveyed through his speeches was clear, as the effect cannot be denied because after he spoke, riots occurred.

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