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Umno, Pas MPs clash over Syariah enactment

PROCEEDINGS were disrupted for several minutes yesterday when MPs from both sides of the divide clashed over the contention that the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Enactment allows husbands to sodomise their wives.

It started when Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) lambasted Pas for its misleading leadership and inability to administer Kelantan and Terengganu.

This sparked an uproar among Pas members. Before long, it developed into a shouting match between both camps.

Bung Mokhtar, who was debating the Budget 2004, lashed out at the enactment, saying it allowed husbands to sodomise their wives.

"Don't trust Pas as they will drag you down," he said to loud tablethumping from backbenchers.

Pas MPs hit the roof when Bung Mokhtar said that Pas leaders were no angels and they were not beyond reproach.

Several Pas members stood up protesting and demanded that the Chair censure Bung Mokhtar for using unparliamentary terms.

On their feet were Ismail Noh (Pas-Pasir Mas), Husam Musa (Pas-Kubang Kerian) and Dr Syed Azman Syed Ahmad Nawawi (Pas-Kuala Terengganu).

The situation worsened when Parliamentary Secretary in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Noh Omar and Datuk Mohamad Aziz (BN-Sri Gading) joined the fray.

Deputy Speaker Datuk Muhamad Abdullah tried to bring order, pleading with members to sit down and observe decorum.

When it failed, he wielded the stick. "Please sit or I will chase all of you out of here. Please don't provoke me to take that action."

He also warned Bung Mokhtar to be more diplomatic in his debate.

Husam tried to cite the Standing Order but his protest was drowned by backbenchers shouting duduk, duduk (sit, sit).

Bung Mokhtar fired back a salvo, saying it was the Kubang Kerian MP who was kurang ajar (ill-mannered) and should be thrown out.

Unperturbed, Husam complained to Muhamad: "You are not doing your job as a Speaker ...ask them to retract."

Muhamad, who was not amused, told Husam to sit down and warned him of the consequences of challenging the Chair.

"Please sit down Kubang Kerian and do not challenge me. If not, I will have to ask you to leave," said Muhamad.

Earlier, Bung Mokhtar thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his brilliant leadership and also for tabling a balance Budget.

"This is not an election budget as claimed by the Opposition but one which looks after the welfare of all. On the contrary, the Opposition only knows to make promises but always cakap tak serupa bikin (empty promises)."