

Heated exchanges disrupt Johari again
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Deputy Internal Security Minister Mohd Johari Baharum was once again disrupted during his ministerial winding up in the Dewan Rakyat today.

This led to heated exchanges which halted the Parliament session for about 20 minutes.

Today's disruption began when Karpal Singh (DAP - Bukit Gelugor) queried Johari on the investigation status into Tengku Mahkota Johor Tunku Ibrahim Ismail Sultan Iskandar who had allegedly physically abused his lover.

When the deputy minister replied that they are waiting for a more detailed report, Karpal commented that the crown prince was like his father, Sultan Iskandar Al-Haj.

"Tengku Mahkota macam bapa dia," he said, angering BN MPs who retorted that the sultan must be addressed by his royal title and called Karpal rude.

Later, M Kulasegaran (DAP - Ipoh Barat) quizzed Johari on his ministry's stand regarding yesterday's fracas in Machap during the nomination for the April 12 by-election.

The deputy minister said the matter was under investigation.

"You say it is under investigation, when I was there, there was no investigation. The police had not even collected the weapons used for evidence," he said to jeers from BN MPs.

'They are all gangsters'

At this point, deputy speaker Lim Si Cheng told Kulasegaran to 'stand down' and the latter replied that MPs were 'neglecting' their duties and Parliament had become 'irrelevant'.

"Enough! Enough! I agree that in Parliament, pertinent issues can be raised. But this is a new matter. The minister (Johari) has already said to wait for the report," said Lim.

"If you are not happy, that is your personal opinion. Would you have us adjourn and wait for the minister to go back to this office and get the report?" he added, igniting a shouting match.

"They are all gangsters over there," said Chong Eng (DAP-Bukit Mertajam) in reference to BN MPs. This prompted Bung Mokhtar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) to shout back: "Who's the gangster?"

After Lim called for calm, he asked Kulasegaran: "How can I make the minister answer your questions in a manner that would satisfy you?"

He told Kulasegaran that he can speak but has to respect Parliament, to which the DAP MP replied that his question on the weapons was not answered. This sparked off another shouting match.

No excuse for 'babi'

Meanwhile, Parliamentary Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timor) expressed regret that he was called 'babi' (pig) during Johari's winding up yesterday.

During the speech, Lim had told several BN MPs to 'mampus' (die) after being heckled and Rosli Mat Hassan (BN-Dunggun) called him 'babi' in return. The deputy speaker made both men withdraw their remarks.

"I admit that I had lost my cool when I was badgered and heckled the whole afternoon yesterday when I sought clarification during the ministerial winding-up.

"When BN MPs continued to try to drown out my attempts to seek clarification from Johari, I lost my patience and told BN MPs who did not want to listen to the clarifications which were public interest issues to 'mampus' and leave the House," he said in a statement.

He said exchanges between MPs are "not uncommon" but "there can be no justification in the use of such invectives which are racist and communalistic."

"When I used the word 'mampus' under great provocation, which I regret using, it was addressed to all BN MPs, whether Umno, MCA, Gerakan or MIC, as it was made in disgust at the repeatedly heckling by BN MPs to stop me from seeking clarifications from the front-bench. There was no tinge of communalism at all.

"But when Rosli responded with the 'babi' invective, it was purely communal in nature, directed only at only one community, the Chinese. Coming from an Umno MP who is supposed to be more sophisticated than the ordinary run of Umno MPs, and holding the post of Mara chairman, it is a sad reflection of an important failure of Malaysian nation-building after 50 years, as it is proof that there are Umno MPs who continue to set the worst examples of communal thinking and prejudices."

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