

DAP chiefs engage 'Speedy Gonzales' Nazri
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Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz came under the crosshairs of two opposition heavyweights in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang and DAP chairperson Karpal Singh fired a volley questions during the minister's winding-up speech on the motion of thanks on the royal address.

During his speech, the minister explained that Vision 2057, mooted by the current administration, is not a revamp of Vision 2020, the brainchild of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This prompted Lim to argue that the government has not even delivered its Vision 2004 - the election pledges made by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"The prime minister promised to speed up the public delivery system, mend inter-ethnic ties and eradicate corruption but none of these have materialised and now we're talking about Vision 2057, isn't this unrealistic?" he asked

"This year when we celebrate our 50th Independence, isn't it important to see that we've failed in our nation-building process?" he added.

"We plan, but God decides," responded Nazri in a philosophical fashion.

"We cannot say something today and implement it tomorrow. We're not the only ones fighting for racial unity, even the UK is fighting for it," he told the opposition leader.

The keris incident

However, Lim remained dissatisfied and asked Nazri if the government is prepared to admit that it has failed to keep the promises made in 2004 and is regressing in terms of nation-building.

As an example, the veteran politician cited the example of Education Minister and Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein raising the keris during the party's annual meet last year.

"After 50 years (of independence), we still have a minister who uses the keris and this does not reflect the government's efforts to foster national unity," he said.

Nazri replied that the opposition will always criticise the government and advised Lim not to view things negatively.

"If you were to brandish a guan dao (a sword used by Chinese warriors), I will not be bothered because I won't look at it negatively. It all comes from your heart and how you view things," he said.

At this juncture, Karpal jumped into the debate and asked the minister if any action was

taken against the two Umno delegates who asked Hishamuddin when he would use the keris.

Nazri said the issue was discussed in the previous Parliament session and therefore should not be raised again.

An annoyed Karpal then likened the minister to the cartoon character 'Speedy Gonzales' for being more interested in running through his speech than answering the queries raised by MPs.

Following this, Lim asked why the attorney-general did not act against Hishammuddin even when police reports were lodged. He said the Umno Youth chief had breached the Sedition Act.

"Is the attorney-general afraid?" asked the opposition leader. Nazri said he would reply when he had an answer.

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