

**BN MPs engage in AirAsia slamfest**  
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**by Hazlan Zakaria**

It was open season for budget carrier AirAsia in Parliament today, as BN parliamentarians took turns slamming the airline for allegedly “cheating” the rakyat.

The matter came about as the MPs issued strongly worded, no-holds-barred statements as they were debating the budget for the Transport Ministry at the policy stage of the 2012 Supply Bill.

“Airasia has been cheating the rakyat for so long and now seeks to cheat (national airline) MAS with this merger. The rakyat has been fooled (led by the nose) by... what is his name... is he that great? Is he so dahsyat?”

“He does not think of the (benefit of the) rakyat, he is only concerned about profit, profit, profit...” said Mohamad Aziz (BN-Seri Gading), opening the barrage against the airline and alluding to the budget carrier’s owner

Mohamad (left), who was intervening during Nancy Shukri’s (BN-Batang Sadong) turn at debate, questioned the free rein given to the firm to operate with near impunity despite its questionable levels of service.

Asking that the Seri Gading MP’s speech be included in her own, Nancy then continued to question AirAsia’s level of service in particular for flights to Sabah and Sarawak, where the locals who have no other choice when it comes to transportation, and have to use whatever scraps that are being thrown at them despite it not being enough.

She also hit out at the airline for not utilising aerobridges for its flights into Kuching Airport as opposed to when overseas, where AirAsia would use foreign aerobridges.

“It is like we are dianaktirikan (neglected) in our own country. What is stopping AirAsia from using an aerobridge in Kuching airport, new ones or use existing ones. If AirAsia can’t or are unwilling to pay, we have Pemandu, why not set an NKRA to improve the situation,” she argued.

Share swap deal comes under fire

Also joining the fray was Mohd Said Yusof (BN-Jasin) who shifted fire to the much-criticised AirAsia-MAS share swap deal.

“The share swap is not actually between MAS and AirAsia. The swap is between Tony Fernandes and Tune Air director Kamarudin Meranun with MAS. Fernandes and Kamaruddin got shares, 20 percent in MAS. What is the guarantee that these businessmen who put profit and money above all else will not sell the shares?”

The barrage against AirAsia was continued by Bung Moktar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) (right) who was more direct in his accusations.

“He (Fernandes) is so great. What he wants, we and the ministry give, even when he continues to suck

the lifeblood of the rakyat. What does he use?

“The ministry should use its brains, regardless of whoever is behind him (Fernandes), when the contention is between AirAsia and the interests of the rakyat, then you should put the people first.”

Calling Fernandes a "thief who steals from the people", he said that the reported plans of the airline magnate to restrict MAS for international traffic and AirAsia to handle domestic travel will mean kiamat (doomsday) for Malaysian air travel.

“I want an explanation! The lifeblood of the people is being sucked dry. If the ministry does not answer, if the government officers do not answer, then I fear there may be ‘interests’ in their relationship with AirAsia.”

He lamented that Fernandes, who is the owner of Tune Air that operates AirAsia, is the master of “tune”, or duping people into doing what he wants.

“Fernandes is the tune (master), he can tune everyone and fool them. All tuned by him.”

Calling the matter a serious issue, Bung Moktar called upon the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate possible wrongdoings and send to prison those found to be guilty, hoping that the opposition MPs would cross the party line and support the BN MPs in their censure of AirAsia.

Mentioning the issues of possible corruption in the AirAsia case and the recent feedlot controversy, Bung Moktar then called upon those responsible to take responsibility and do the honourable thing.

“This is not the work of Umno, it is the work of individuals. If I were the individual in question, I would resign!”

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