'Anjing' and 'binatang' echoes in Parliament
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PARLIAMENT Despite Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia's urging for members of the 13th Parliament to 'ubah' (change) to mature and well-behaved parliamentarians, cries of "anjing" (dog) and "binatang" (animal) filled the Dewan Rakyat yesterday as veteran MPs found that old habits die hard, and new kids on the block eager to show spunk portrayed their witty side, or lack thereof.

"Anjing!" cried Bung Mokhtar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) in response to prodding from the other side of the aisle, as an unidentified voice shouted "binatang" at him.

NONEThis happened when the spirited MP, well known for his saucy language and aggressive debating style, was interjecting during Shamsul Annuar Nasarah's (right) (BN-Lenggong) turn at debating the royal address.

This prompted members to stand up from both sides of the House quoting Standing Order 36 specifically on subheadings prohibiting uncouth language, to demand a retraction of the "anjing" and "binatang" uttered in the August House.

Deputy speaker Ronald Kiandee, who presided during the session, was hard pressed to settle the matter as no one from the opposition owned up to the "binatang" yell, while Bung and BN MPs remained adamant that the Kinabatangan MP's "anjing" call should not be retracted until the other side retracts their earlier invective.

In the end, Kiandee reminded both sides to behave themselves during debates in the August House.

NONEBung (left), who hailed from Sabah and whose head of state is a federally-appointed governor, was passionately urging his Umno colleague, Shamsul Annuar, to use his speech to ask the government to institute a Treason Act akin to lèse-majesté laws in monarchies like Thailand, to protect the sanctity of the Malay royalty, specifically the Agong.

"Enact the Treason Act, jail those who are treasonous," he spiritedly argued.

Another MP from the same monarch-less state, Abdul Ghapur Salleh (BN-Kalabakan) also interjected in support of Bung Mokhtar's suggestion.

"All rakyat must respect the king, or else they can leave the country," he suggested.

Internet censorship a 'price to pay'

Bung said the need for lèse-majesté-like laws is paramount now that there are people like the two Chinese Malaysians who were investigated for allegedly disparaging the Agong in a Facebook posting. He was careful to point out that he is not a racist in mentioning that the duo are Chinese.

NONEHowever Mohd Hanipa Maidin (right) (PAS-Sepang) interjected to counter-argue that to use Thailand as a benchmark for Malaysia is not appropriate as unlike Thailand's absolute monarchy, Malaysia has a constitutional monarchy.

Other Pakatan Rakyat MPs also interjected refuting the BN representatives and their arguments.

Shamsul Annuar continued to argue that while the government has no plans to license online media and is bound by its promise in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) charter not to censor the Internet, the price that must be paid for those choices may be too high as it may impinge upon the country's peace and harmony.

Therefore he urged the government to institute laws to govern the use of the Internet and social media to prevent misuse, arguing that such laws also existed in countries said to uphold freedom of expression like the United States, United Kingdom and Australia.

This prompted Hasbullah Osman (BN-Gerik) to interject, asking if this has any bearing on the supposed Red Bean Army, the much talked about, alleged DAP cybertroopers.

Shamsul Annuar said that the Red Bean Army should be investigated thoroughly, amidst heckling by DAP MPs who shouted that they also want to know who are the "tentera ais kacang".

NONEThe Lenggong MP then poked fun at Pakatan allegations of phantom voters from Bangladesh by teasing them with his own personal account of supposed Indonesians and Bangladeshi at the recent opposition-organised Black 505 anti-electoral fraud rally in Padang Merbok.

"I walk to some who were there and I ask, bro from where? He answered, from Surabaya.

"I walk again to another group, and asked, bro from where? Are you from Baling? He answered, no from Bangla."

MPs turned hecklers

Shamsul Annuar joked that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's earlier consternation about the lack of proof of alleged Bangladeshis who were supposedly recruited by the BN to be phantom voters may be explained by the fact that the foreigners were instead swelling Pakatan rallies.

NONEHis jibe was answered by laughter from his BN fellows and derisive jeers from the Pakatan side.

But Kiandee (left) was not alone in having to face such antics from the veteran MPs reprising their roles as class clowns and resident bullies, while new kids on the block showed off their vocal muscles.

His counterpart Ismail Mohamed Aziz, a contender himself during heated parliamentary debates when he was just an MP, also faced similar issues when he presided over the afternoon session featuring Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim's turn at debating the royal address.

Other then the usual suspects like Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) and Bung, newbies from BN especially tried hard to show their wit, but end up mostly turning into hecklers.

Pandikar himself when presiding over the Question Time in the morning session faced similar antics, forcing him to appeal to the MPs to not bring up matters that are irrelevant.

"If there are more who interrupt and do not follow the agenda of the debate, I will let you take a break - there is a lot more 'teh tarik' out there," he said in a veiled threat of ejecting errant MPs from the House.

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