

Kit Siang, Nazri turn up the heat
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The Parliament session for this year witnessed its first barb-trading session courtesy of two top politicians who are no strangers to such feats.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timor) struck the first blow when he likened Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to the famed magician David Copperfield.

The comparison was drawn due to Abdullah's absence from Parliament. In retaliation, Nazri (BN-Padang Renggas) accused DAP of practising dictatorship.

The name calling began when Nazri - on behalf of Abdullah - answered Lim's questions that were directed at the prime minister.

"This not a wish away and he is not David Copperfield," said the frustrated opposition leader in reference to Abdullah.

Nazri replied that the prime minister has many other things to do and has delegated some of his tasks to his subordinates in Barisan Nasional (BN).

"Anyone in BN can answer on behalf of the PM. He has assigned us to answer for him. Not like DAP where you practice dictatorship," he said.

Progress report

Lim had asked Abdullah to furnish a progress report on his reform pledges for the past 40 months since he became prime minister and what steps will he employ to remedy the 'disappointment' of Malaysians in his leadership.

Nazri answered that Abdullah has pledged to carry out all the plans framed by his predecessor to achieve Vision 2020 and among the initiatives taken is the forming of the National Mission as announced in the Ninth Malaysia Plan last year.

"The National Mission is a framework for the progress of the country as it outlines the important steps to be taken to achieve Vision 2020," he said.

Nazri said numerous measures have been taken under the National Mission to bring development to the country.

The opposition's statement that the public is disappointed is unreasonable, he added.

General elections

However, Lim remained unconvinced. He went on to allege that Abdullah had indeed failed in his mission, especially in his pledge to fight corruption.

"Corruption is rampant presently, especially among the top officers like the ACA

(Anti-Corruption Agency) chief himself," he said.

"The general public is disappointed and have lost faith in the government," he claimed.

In response, Nazri said the coming general election will reveal if the people have lost confidence in the government. He asked Lim to wait until then.

Earlier this month, the nation was rocked by two high-profile corruption scandals involving ACA director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor and Deputy Internal Security Minister Mohd Johari Baharum.

Zulkipli was said to have amassed properties and wealth beyond his means while Johari was accused of accepting bribes amounting to RM5.5 million to free criminal suspects held under the Emergency Ordinance.

The duo have denied the allegations and the cases are currently under investigation.

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