

Nazri rapped over 'poor' replies
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Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz has come under fire over his responses to certain queries raised during his winding-up speech in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

According to Parliamentary Opposition Leader, the minister provided "unsatisfactory and unacceptable" replies concerning public interest issues such as the brain drain, corruption, inter-faith council and Umno Youth chief Hishamuddin Hussein's keris-wielding act.

"Nazri likening the brain-drain to 'ants attracted to sugar' is not only offensive to Malaysians forced to migrate due to unfair policies, but proves the continuing denial syndrome for an urgent reappraisal of the 50-years of Barisan Nasional nation-building policies," he said.

Speaking at a press conference in the Parliament lobby today, he said the brain drain over three decades since the introduction of the New Economic Policy marked the greatest nation-building failure.

"This is why Malaysia trails behind Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea when we were ahead of them once in terms of economic development.

"Now, we risk losing out to more nations like Thailand, Vietnam and one day, even to Indonesia," he added.

As for the keris incident, the opposition leader said he is not only disappointed with Nazri but also MCA ministers and MPs for defending Hishamuddin.

"Nazri compounded the matter when he repeated Hishammuddin's earlier statement that he would not object if I brandished the guan dao (a sword used by Chinese warriors)," he added.

Inter-faith council

Lim said he was also puzzled as to why the cabinet cannot accept the proposal to set up an interfaith council when in the past there was an inter-religious council initiated by the first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and chaired by a cabinet minister.

"Nazri said my argument is valid but the government will not form the council because the government has no way to persuade the majority of Muslims to support it.

"How can such an argument be accepted?" asked Lim.

Meanwhile, the opposition leader said the time has come for Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to summon a special cabinet meeting to address corruption and demonstrate the political will to arrest, prosecute and jail top political government leaders.

"I reminded Nazri of the Chinese leader Zhu Rongji who declared war on corruption and asked for 100 coffins - 99 for the corrupt in high places and one for himself. I asked if the

PM has the political will to emulate Zhu Rongji.

"And it is most unfortunate that Nazri tried to make a joke of this by saying that he would reserve 10 coffins for DAP," he added.

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