

War of words in assembly over media and budget
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Nga Kor Ming (DAP-Pantai Remis) went on the warpath with both assembly speaker R Ganesan and Menteri Besar Zambry Abd Kadir on the second day of the 2011 Perak budget assembly sitting today.

The first round of the war of words was with Ganesan, for not allowing media members to report live from today's state assembly sitting.

NONENga (left) said, "This is outrageous and grossly unfair when the BN-friendly media is allowed in while the independent media is barred from entering the House."

Ganesan replied: "All the media were misbehaving and did not respect this august House, (as they were) taking photographs and holding a media conference in the assembly."

Nga retorted: "Don't insult the media as it is a falsehood that the media has ever held a media conference inside the assembly."

Nga said it is in the media room that all media conferences are held by elected representatives.

"It is also a grave insult to the freedom of the press and it is proof of the BN's cowardice, that it is afraid of the media reporting the truth," he said.

"Malaysia is a democratic country unlike Myanmar and North Korea, and freedom of the press must be safeguarded."

NONENga went on to question why the media must be imprisoned in an "aquarium" and prevented from reporting what happens in the assembly.

He also took Ganesan (right) to task for switching off his microphone whenever he tried to voice his views.

To this Ganesan said: "The media is provided with all the facilities (seats and television monitors to view a 'live' telecast of the proceedings).

Later, when answering Nga's question on the total deficit budget of the state from 1999-2010, Zambry and the DAP leader had a war of words on the financial status of Perak.

Cousin Ngeh Koo Ham (DAP-Sitiawan) jumped into the fray and they were joined by V Sivakumar (DAP-Tronoh) at one end, with Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar (BN-Kubu Gajah) coming to Zambry's aid.

The Question hour was used up by the argument, with only two out of the 31 questions being answered.

Ganesan then announced that the sitting would continue until Friday to give the lawmakers time to debate the 2011 state budget.

Sitting up to Friday

Later, at a hastily-conducted media conference, Zambry said he had enough of the "lies put forward by Nga" on the status of Perak's finances.

NONEHe said Nga was seeking cheap publicity by quoting the wrong figures.

"He (Nga) has been telling the whole world such lies and I have no place to defend myself in all the media.

"This is the only avenue (assembly sitting) for me to make it clear (the financial status) and explain (the issue) face to face."

Asked if Nga would be referred to the privileges committee for misleading the House with his statements, Zambry (right) said: "I shall leave it to the speaker to decide on the matter."

But he added quickly: "There is no necessity to make such a hasty move and I am sure that the speaker will also agree with me."

He advised Nga to tell the truth and not to mislead the people.

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