

I nearly cried, says Yen Yen of accusations
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Tourism Minister Dr Ng Yen Yen said she "nearly cried" from all the accusations thrown against her ministry.

"Listening to the members of Parliament criticising our (Malaysian pavilion) at the World Expo in Shanghai, China, is upsetting," she exclaimed.

Ng (BN-Raub) was responding to the pay-cut motion moved against her by opposition parliamentarian Tian Chua (PKR-Batu).

Expressing concern over the minister's exorbitant travel expenses locally and abroad, Tian Chua tabled a motion today to cut her salary by RM100.

The minister, the PKR MP said, had to explain why the government spent 40 percent more for her travels - and a 70 percent drop in promotional expenses.

Anthony Loke (DAP-Rasah) also rapped Ng on the Malaysia Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo.

Loke said the expo was just another fair promoting tourism, not an in-depth venture promoting Malaysian culture.

"The artist hired to sing was from Taiwan, while an actor promoting a local product was from Hong Kong.

"Why not have local singers or actors promote Malaysia there? Locally, they hardly get the opportunity to showcase their talents," he said.

Ng: Six provinces had applied to host M'sia Pavilion

However, Ng defended herself against the brickbats and said six provinces in China had applied to the ministry to host a Malaysia pavilion in their areas.

"Until now we haven't decided on who to give it to," she said.

Reading out an excerpt from one of the applications, she said, "We have visited the Malaysian Pavilion... where Malaysia's excellent culture was concentrated to the perfect performance."

Clearly frustrated by the criticism, Ng (left) said the Shanghai pavilion had 17 touch-screen television sets and local delicacies such as satay and curry puff.

"When I'm overseas, people asked me if news that an MP had bitten a police officer was true... I don't know how to answer as I'm ashamed," she retorted, hinting at Tian Chua's conviction for biting a police personnel three years ago.

"I just tell them that sometimes that happens," she said, smiling.

Bung Mokhtar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) also spoke on Ng's behalf, calling the opposition "qi xin" (insane in Cantonese).

The motion was rejected despite strong resistance from the opposition.

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