

Parliament roundup: Umno MPs have a go at each other
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The spat between de facto law minister Zaid Ibrahim and two Barisan Nasional (BN) members of parliament - Mukhriz Mahathir (Umno-Jerlun) and Tajuddin Abdul Rahman (Umno-Pasir Salak)- was heating up in Parliament this past week.
MCPX

So much so it forced Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to step in between the quarelling MPs.

So far he has ruled out action against any BN MP who levelled constructive criticisms against the government. Abdullah assured that there would be no review of Zaid's position as minister in the Prime Minister's Department despite clamour from his detractors.

The Star reported today that Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor directed the three to cease bickering in public or through the media.

On Wednesday, Zaid said Tajuddin and Mukhriz should not level unconstructive accusations at himself, the government or the prime minister, which he insisted amounted to insulting them.

This was in response to Tajuddin who on Tuesday attacked him for falsely accusing him and labelling him 'irresponsible' for failing to understand the role of parliamentarians.

"Our role is to give our views and debate. It is not just parliamentarians from the opposition who can criticise the government - so can the backbenchers. I cannot agree with his prerogative but as the law minister, I hope he can carry out his tasks responsibly."

"But if this is his attitude, I urge the PM to re-examine his appointment," Tajuddin had said.

BMC violence

Even in Parliament the Bandar Mahkota Cheras (BMC) debacle was hotly debated, what more with the claims of hired thugs and police brutality. The violence centres around the struggle of the residents seeking a toll-free access road shut down by the toll operators.

Selangor Menteri Besar and PKR MP for Bandar Tun Razak Abdul Khalid Ibrahim revealed on Wednesday that a state-owned company holds a sizable stake in toll concessionaire Grand Saga, which is embroiled in the BMC dispute with the residents.

On the final day of Parliament sitting, Deputy Home Minister Chor Chee Heung raised the ire of many when he justified police inaction on the night of the scuffle between the residents and alleged thugs.

The police did not initially interfere in the scuffle because they were managing traffic and were unable to act due to their numbers and were waiting for back-up, said Chor.

Earlier in the day, a group of BMC residents had brought their grievances to Parliament to

hand over a memorandum to Works Minister Mohd Zin Mohamed.

Developments over the week included the meeting between Abdullah and Ezam Mohamad Nor to welcome the latter's return to Umno.

Ezam was PKR youth chief and close aide of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim since before reformasi.

Gobala's (mis)conduct

Among the more hilarious incidents this week occurred after Deputy Higher Education Minister Idris Haron chose to show off his linguistic dexterity by telling an opposition MP to sit down - in Tamil.

Idris' pronunciation of the phrase sounded uncomfortably close, however, to an expletive, and unleashing a pandemonium rarely seen even in the usually boistrous Dewan Rakyat.

The House descended further into chaos when N Gopalakrishnan (PKR-Padang Serai) shocked everyone by suddenly walking up to House speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia to whisper the meaning of the expletive.

The matter was settled when Mohd Azmin Ali (PKR-Gombak), acting as chief whip for PKR, asked Gopalakrishnan to apologise to the House, which he immediately did.

But Gopalakrishnan was not in a forgiving mood, firing away at Idris when talking to reporters at the Parliament lobby, and at the same time milking all the publicity that he could garner.

What's next in Parliament?

This session of Parliament ended yesterday with members having a three-week recess until June 23.

The following are Malaysiakini's reports from Parliament this week.

May 29

Deputy home minister justifies police action at BMC clash

Arab tourists the biggest spenders

BMC residents take grouses to Parliament

M'sian missions going 'overboard' for VIP wives?

May 28

Najib: RapidKL subsidies to be withdrawn

Women's parliamentary caucus mooted

BN gets scare in bloc-vote test

May 27

(Beep!) remark brings House down

Zaid ticked off over 'false allegations'

Motion on Batu Puteh shot down

Speaker warns Kit Siang over blog posting

May 26

Malaysiakini journalist loses laptop in Parliament

Azmi is the new PAC chairperson

FTA with US: M'sian farmers will not lose out

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