

BTN, 'doormat' take centre stage

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■ By V. Vasudevan

TWO events outside the Dewan Rakyat had a huge impact on the house this week.

The Bureau Tatanegara (BTN) programme and the controversial "doormat" at the Perak DAP convention saw a slew of press conferences being organised either in defence or against the two.

On Monday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz tried to cap the BTN programme debate by stating the government was revamping it.

Pakatan Rakyat members grudgingly accepted it although in the course of the day they continued to rail against the BTN.

But a day later, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan sent everyone into a tizzy when he declared that the BTN programme would not be "revamped but would only be upgraded".

So what exactly is the government doing with the programme? Is it undergoing a revamp or an upgrade?

"I am the minister. You can call it what you like but what I said is what is going to happen," Nazri said irritably when approached later.

Ahmad conceded the next day that his statement could have been overtaken by events as he had been briefed before an upgrade in April soon after he had assumed his position as deputy minister.

The controversial "doormat" at the Perak DAP convention featured the faces of three former Pakatan Rakyat assemblymen — Hee Yit Foong, Mohd Osman Jailu and Jamaluddin Mohd Radzi — who had left the alliance, resulting in its collapse. The three became independents and now support BN.

Party members, including

bigwigs attending the convention, were encouraged to wipe their shoes on a large poster of Hee, Osman and Jamaluddin placed on the floor of the entrance to the convention at a hotel here as a way of expressing their disgust with them.

But this appeared to have backfired and created a furor of sorts among the public which obviously registered with the DAP leadership, as it made an apology on Monday. DAP state chairman Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham (DAP-Beruas) told the press he regretted it if the "doormat" incident had offended Malaysians.

Similar regret was expressed by state DAP secretary Nga Kor Ming (DAP-Taip-ing) who hoped Barisan Nasional, too, would offer some kind of apology for the burning of an effigy of Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng outside the Penang state assembly on Monday.

The issue surfaced in the chambers on Thursday when Datuk Ismail Mohamed Said (BN-Kuala Krau) raised it in a novel style while debating the 2010 Budget allocation for the Tourism Ministry at the committee stage.

Ismail said he looked up to Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timur) and equated Lim, in terms of stature, to Pas spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

"However, he has let everybody down by condoning the despicable action of his people. He should be teaching those under him about right and wrong," he said, noting



Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen told DAP chairman Karpal Singh that 'to deal with you, one needs a gangster'

that Lim had also participated by walking on the "doormat".

This drew protests from DAP MPs but Ismail stood his ground as Datuk Mohamad Aziz (BN-Sri Gading) and Datuk Ismail Abdul Mutalib (BN-Marang) joined him.

Meanwhile, Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen proved to be no pushover as DAP members attempted to discredit her while winding up the 2010 Budget at the committee stage.

DAP chairman Karpal Singh (DAP-Bukit Gelugor) tried to revive the old complaint against Dr Ng that she was once an Australian permanent resident and, therefore, unsuitable to be a minister.

Dr Ng held her ground, dismissing Karpal and drawing admiration as she dealt with the veteran opposition leader.

At the height of their exchange, Karpal told deputy speaker Datuk Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar that "the minister is a gangster".

To which Dr Ng replied: "To deal with you, one needs a gangster!"

The Dewan sits again on Monday.

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