

# Shouting match over PM's review

## 40-minute chaos ensues in the House with an Opposition lawmaker booted out

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The much-anticipated explanation by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Parliament on the outcome of Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's recent graft case quickly descended into chaos with Members of Parliament from opposite sides trying to outshout each other.

The Prime Minister's attempts to explain former attorney general Tan Sri Idrus Harun's decision to grant a discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) to the Deputy Prime Minister were interrupted by the Opposition lawmakers repeatedly.

This resulted in a 40-minute shouting match ensuing in the House which saw an Opposition lawmaker being booted out by Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Johari Abdul.

Before the ruckus, Anwar informed the House that he would explain the DNAA following repeated calls by the Opposition for an explanation throughout the six-day special sitting.

"Usually, the wrapping up of the Malaysia Plan will be done by the respective ministers and not by the Prime Minister.

"Just because there were several queries, I made it a point to address this," he said when wrapping up replies on the 12th Malaysia Plan in Parliament yesterday.

When order was restored in the House, Anwar said the DNAA decision was based on the good conscience of Idrus before his retirement.

He said he asked Idrus on the reasons for his decision on the DNAA when he learnt about it.

"He said he had to grant it due to certain reasons.

"I asked if it could be delayed?"

"He said no.

"(He said it is) my duty and my conscience, and I have to do it before I leave," Anwar told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Idrus had gone on leave prior to his official retirement on Sept 6,



**A fiery moment:** Radzi standing up to interrupt Anwar's explanation at the Dewan Rakyat. — Bernama

two days before the DNAA was announced by the High Court.

On Sept 4, when the DNAA was granted to the Deputy Prime Minister, deputy public prosecutor Datuk Ahmad Dusuki Mokhtar listed down 11 reasons for the decision.

Anwar refuted allegations by Opposition chief Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin (PN-Larut) that he intervened in the decision by "discussing it" with Idrus.

"When the AG made the decision, I only asked him what the reasons were and did not discuss with him," he said, adding that Idrus had given the 11 reasons that prompted the decision.

He also told Opposition MPs not to hurl accusations without proof.

"Where is the proof that I intervened?" he asked.

Following the decision, Anwar

said the MACC said it would continue investigations and charges would be brought if there was additional evidence.

"It is as though I must order the AG to go ahead with the charges against the Deputy Prime Minister 1, then I will be deemed as a hero. But I cannot go against Article 145(3) (of the Federal Constitution)," he said.

Article 145(3) stipulates the discretionary power of the AG with regard to instituting, conducting or discontinuing any proceedings for any offence.

Anwar cited several precedents including one involving Karpal Singh in 1991 where the courts decided that the AG's discretionary powers cannot be questioned.

Anwar also reminded the Opposition that Idrus was appointed by the Perikatan

Nasional government, adding that he did not change the AG after coming into power.

The Prime Minister cited several cases as precedents where the DNAA was granted despite the prosecution establishing a prima facie case, including that of a politician from the Opposition bench.

"There have been previous precedents where the prosecution was halted after a prima facie case was successfully proven against the accused and where the accused had been ordered to enter defence," he said.

Among the cases was that of Siti Aisyah and Doan Thi Huong who were involved in the murder of Kim Jong-nam, where Siti Aisyah was given a DNAA by the Shah Alam High Court in March 2019.

Earlier, Anwar's attempts to explain the DNAA ran into hic-

cups when he was interrupted several times.

A fiery exchange ensued when Anwar took a swipe at Datuk Dr Radzi Jidin (PN-Putrajaya) for "laughing" during his explanation.

"You can laugh, Putrajaya, because you did it before," Anwar said.

This resulted in Radzi demanding that Anwar apologise and retract his statement despite repeated calls from Johari for calm.

The Speaker made a ruling that there was no need for Anwar to retract his statement after the Prime Minister clarified what he meant.

Anwar had referred to the former Perikatan administration and merely said, "Putrajaya knows what it did."

Ahmad Zahid had previously claimed that the charges against him were politically motivated and selective prosecution by the Perikatan administration.

Johari was forced to eject an emotional Radzi from the House after he refused to heed several warnings to sit down.

"It affects my dignity and I want a retraction now," Radzi said.

His ejection resulted in a walk-out by the Perikatan Opposition bench.

At a press conference, Hamzah said the walkout was to protest the lies and injustice perpetrated in the House against Radzi.

He also chided Johari for playing judge in an unfair manner towards Radzi.

The House later passed the motion on the 12th Malaysia Plan mid-term review following six days of debates.