

Nazri: ISA helped in stopping threats
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THE repealed Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960 had served its purpose well in stopping potential threats against the people and properties, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

He disclosed several facts and cases on how the ISA, described as a draconian law by some quarters, had succeeded in stopping the threats, when tabling the Security Offences (Special Measures) 2012 Bill for a third reading in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

The bill, which replaced the ISA, was passed without any amendments.

It was tabled for a second reading by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on Monday, where the bill was debated for 10 hours.

Nazri, when winding up debate on the bill, stressed that it was a law that was different and could not be equated with the ordinary criminal law.

He said the bill was enacted to protect Malaysia from exposure to terrorist attacks and the country could not afford to wait until bad things happen.

"Malaysia cannot delay and leave a void in our law towards our fight against terrorism."

Nazri said militants that existed in this country and the region included Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and Darul Islam (DI).

"In Malaysia, we managed to thwart several attacks with preventive and preemptive measures (provided by laws, including the ISA).

"It was with these laws that the authorities were able to detect their operations and track down these militants."

Nazri also said since ISA was enforced 52 years, a total of 10,883 people had been detained under Section 8(1), while 4,461 were issued detention orders.

To date, 22 militants had been identified by the police and many more were believed to exist "and they are on the police radar".

Nazri said Malaysia must learn from the Sept 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States, which saw its government activate a strict law against terrorism threats following the incident.

"We cannot afford to wait for terrorists to attack the Petronas twin towers before we scramble to think of a law to address terrorism," he said, stressing on the importance of the bill to maintain peace and prosperity in Malaysia.

On worries expressed by certain members of parliament (MPs) that the bill would be abused, Nazri said the current government had given more than an assurance or promise by codifying several safeguards into the bill.

An attempt by R. Sivarasa (PKR-Subang) to send the bill for a review by the Parliamentary Select Committee was rejected.

He had submitted a motion notice under Standing Order 55(1) to the Speaker's office last Friday, seeking for the second reading of the bill to be postponed for six months pending the PSC's review.

Sivarasa had tabled the motion on Monday before Najib tabled the bill for a second reading.

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