

Government Seeks To Fortify Emergency Flood Response

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By Mohd Razman Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The Dewan Rakyat sittings in the second week saw the Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak administration proposing improvements to the national emergency flood response while the opposition commended the government move to implement the Syariah Index based on the 'maqasid syariah' principles.

At the first day's sitting, the prime minister announced that the government would review the standard operating procedure in flood disaster management following the massive floods that displaced more than 200,000 people in six states late last year.

He also said that there was no need to set up a royal commission of inquiry to look into how the recent flood disaster was managed.

On the same day, Najib launched the Services Sector Blueprint and Logistics and Trade Facilitation Masterplan that outlined the strategic steps to optimise the sector's contribution to the national economy.

In a rare move, Siti Zailah Mohd Yusoff (PAS-Rantau Panjang) and Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin (PKR-Bukit Katil) expressed their support for the implementation of the Syariah Index to serve as a benchmark of the country's achievements as an Islamic nation.

"The opposition has been struggling to propose the matter since the time of (former Kelantan menteri besar) Datuk Seri Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. Such a good effort has been launched now although Tok Guru (Nik Abdul Aziz) has passed away," said Siti Zailah.

Rafizi Ramli (PKR-Pandan) tried to cause a ruckus when he alleged that the prime minister had acquired a new jet for his official trips abroad.

The Prime Minister's Office clarified that the executive aircraft, Airbus Corporate Jetliner (ACJ320), was purchased to replace the government's 16-year-old Boeing Business Jet (BBJ).

It said the government decided to acquire the ACJ320 through a 15-year hire-purchase contract to replace the BBJ aircraft, which would be disposed of to partly finance the ACJ320 purchase.

Several ruling party MPs perceived the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) as a proactive measure of the government in curbing the spread of the threat posed by the IS militant group in the country.

Datuk Irmohizam Ibrahim (BN-Kuala Selangor) called for drastic action by the government, saying an increasing number of Malaysians had been manipulated into joining the militant

group.

Datuk Ikmal Hisham Abdul Aziz (BN-Tanah Merah), who was of the same opinion, suggested that the Home Ministry and the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) cooperate to expose the deviant ideology and atrocities of the IS 'faces behind the masks' that did not represent the true teachings of Islam.

The MPs also discussed other issues, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to be implemented on April 1; the status of 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB); convicted Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's insistence on attending Dewan Rakyat sittings; the health sector; foreign workers; rural development and education.

Certain opposition MPs attempted to drag Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia into their political agenda, prompting him to advise MPs against criticising him in the house or outside.

"The ruling party and the opposition have their political agendas. If I am dragged along into their political agendas, what will become of Parliament?" he asked.

This week's sittings were confined to the debate on the motion of thanks for the royal address. Next week's sittings will be devoted to winding-up speeches.

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