

# 'Unstoppable' Nazri irks DAP

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A SLANGING match erupted in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday as DAP MPs trained their guns on Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz, who did not disappoint them.

Although the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department was forced to cut short his 80-page speech to 20 pages, he gave as good as he got.

He refused to give way to Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timur), who wanted clarification on the direction of the government under Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Lim had sought clarification on the Prime Minister's remarks in Havana, Cuba, that he had not lost control of his administration.

However, Nazri continued

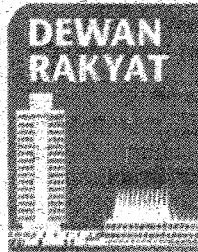
like a "bullet train" — Lim's description of his speaking style — which infuriated Lim further.

Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah) and Chong Eng (DAP-Bukit Mertajam) entered the exchange at this point to challenge Nazri's statement that he reserved the right to continue without giving way.

As the 12 DAP MPs tried to get deputy speaker Datuk Lim Si Cheng's attention to speak, the minister, who is known for his frank manner, refused to accede.

For close to 50 minutes, mayhem prevailed as MPs from both sides of the political divide exchanged words which threatened on occasion to get them into hot water.

When calls for "point of or-



## ■ Reports by Wan Hamidi Hamid, Eileen Ng and Arman Ahmad

der" and repeated attempts to get the minister to provide explanations failed, unparliamentary language crept in.

But MPs from both sides managed to steer clear of trouble despite words like "ku-

rang ajar" (rude), "bodoh" (stupid) and "pekak" (deaf) as Si Cheng had his hands full maintaining decorum.

As Nazri stood his ground and read from his prepared speech, Datuk Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar (BN-Larut) told the DAP MPs to leave if they did not want to listen to Nazri.

This led to a "walkout" by 10 DAP MPs led by Kit Siang but it was short-lived as they trooped back five minutes later.

In the interim, Karpal Singh (DAP-Bukit Gelugor) asked Si Cheng to "restrain the out-of-control minister" but Nazri was not to be stopped.

The verbal fracas came to an end when Si Cheng asked Nazri to shorten his speech.

"Can you finish it in half an hour?" he asked, to which the minister replied that he could do so immediately.

"With this I end my reply. Those who are interested in my speech can get printed copies from me later," he said.

Nazri had started off well in his winding-up on the debate on the Supply Bill 2007 but walked into problems when talking about funds raised for tsunami victims and former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's allegations against the government.

Speaking in the lobby later, Nazri reiterated his stand that he had the right not to give way to opposition MPs.

He said MPs could discuss his reply during the committee stage of proceedings.