

BN: Kedah assembly 'express sitting' undemocratic
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Kedah MCA and Gerakan have decried the speedy conduct of the state legislative assembly sitting, which prevents the opposition from raising many public interest issues.

In a press release today, state MCA chief Chor Chee Heung said question time during the one-day sitting yesterday was 78 minutes long and only five questions were answered.

Chor said that this was a tactic by Menteri Besar Azizan Abu Bakar to prevent scrutiny of his administration.

"Incapable of churning out any reasonable or appropriate answers, they have to resort to adjourning the session the soonest possible to escape dealing with festering issues and public criticism," said Chor, who is the Alor Setar parliamentarian.

Contacted for details, Derga state assemblyperson Dr Cheah Soon Hai said the practice of having one-day sittings and short question time prevented many issues from being raised.

He said the state government had the prerogative of arranging the order of questions and the questions that were replied yesterday were mostly designed to allow backbenchers to indulge in chest thumping.

'Make question time three hours'

Making matters worse was the fact that each state assemblyperson is asked to contribute six questions for the state assembly, when the government appeared to be only prepared to answer a handful.

"Sometimes the ruling party can allow certain topics to drag on to score points and waste our time," he said.

Among others, Cheah said the opposition bench had questions about the Kolej Universiti Insaniah (Kuin) controversy, race-based housing quotas and logging issues.

In order to have a meaningful sitting, Cheah said question time should be lengthened to three hours.

"Unlike Parliament, where question time can be held every day, we only have a one-day sitting," he said.

Chor also described the sitting as "shambolic" and reflected badly on the lack of democratic ideals by Pakatan Rakyat.

Cheah is the sole Gerakan state assemblyperson in Kedah while MCA has one state assemblyperson, Dr Leong Yong Kong for Gurun.

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