

PM's question time in Parliament session needs study

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The suggestion to have a Prime Minister's Question Time session in Parliament would have to be studied in detail before implementation due to Premier Najib Abdul Razak's busy schedule, said Rural and Regional Development Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

In addition, there are other ministers within the Prime Minister's Department who could field those questions for him, he said.

"I believe the matter needs to be discussed, because there are times when the prime minister is overseas. If it is mandated that he must answer questions every week, it will be hard if he is abroad.

"If here are important meetings that are scheduled earlier, such as the Asean Summit, that prime minister can't be expected to leave to answer questions in Parliament," Ismail (photo) told reporters when asked during a press conference in Putrajaya today. Dewan Rakyat Speaker Pandikar Amin Malia had mooted the idea of having an Australian-style Prime Minister's Question Time since April last year, following a meeting with Australian Deputy Speaker Bruce Scott.

Under the system, according to a Bernama report of the meeting, the prime minister would have to spend a day each week when Parliament is in session to field questions from other parliamentarians.

However, Ismail Sabri pointed out that as it is, Najib already attends Parliament to answer questions during the first week of a parliamentary session if he has time, and has also fielded questions directed to the Prime Minister's Department.

Najib's attendance record at Parliament had been questioned last year by Bakri MP Er Tek Hwa, who said the Pekan MP only present in 26 out of 358 days since becoming prime minister in 2009 up to June 17, 2014.

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