

## **'Najib shouldn't delegate crucial TPPA debate to minister'**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak must speak for the government at the special parliamentary sitting on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), instead of delegating it to the international trade and industry minister, said PKR deputy president Azmin Ali.

Azmin, who is also Gombak MP, said Najib must debate the matter because the TPPA has "far-reaching consequences" for all Malaysians.

"The prime minister cannot delegate the fundamental and critical task of convincing the nation on why we should accept such a one-sided trade agreement.

"He must come to Parliament and face the nation and the rakyat," Azmin said in a statement.

The Selangor menteri besar said while foreign investment is important to the economy, it must be pursued "on an equal footing which then leads to mutual benefit".

"We don't oppose free trade agreements but we need fair, free trade and mutually productive investments that benefit all. This TPPA does not...

"Right-minded Malaysians, civil society organisations and the people's representatives must stand united to demand that these rights continue to be protected and not be sacrificed for the TPPA," he said.

He said various aspects of the agreement impede Malaysians' fundamental liberties.

This includes "the right to freedom, life, health, knowledge and to be duly informed".

This is due to provisions on intellectual property protection favouring drug-makers, which Azmin said is a "death warrant" for those depending on cheaper generic medicine to survive.

Existing provisions for intellectual property protection are already sufficient to safeguard interests of drug-makers, he said.

Provisions on industrial-state disputes will also undermine the state's ability to take public health policy measures, which could go against corporate interests, he said.

Other "people-centric" policy measures which could be impeded include housing, education and the environment, he said.

Access to knowledge will also be limited under TPPA, with the extension of copyright duration of 50 years after an author's death, he said.

Mandating equal footing for foreign and local players in government procurements will also hurt local industry, he added.

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