

Najib didn't stick around for budget debate

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PARLIAMENT Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak did not stick around for today's Budget 2017 debate.

Najib left the House soon after answering questions during Minister's Question Time.

It is unclear if he was heading to Johor Baru following news of the fire at the Sultanah Aminah Hospital this morning.

However, based on past observations, Najib always leaves the Dewan Rakyat after he has answered one or two written questions aimed at him.

Today was also one of those rare occasions where he is present in the House.

Two years ago, DAP's Bakri MP Er Teck Hwa revealed that Najib only attended Parliament 26 out of 358 days, from the day he became prime minister in 2009 up till June 17, 2014.

This attendance record does not appear to have improved since then.

Meanwhile, attendance in the House was low when the budget debate began shortly after 12pm, with less than 30 MPs present.

There were also no ministers or deputy ministers present.

However, this is not uncommon during budget debates, which lasts for around five weeks.

Each ministry also has aides stationed in the Parliament lobby to observe the debates and take notes.

Meanwhile, when asked whether ministers or their deputies should be in the House for budget debates, speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia told *Malaysiakini*: "You should ask them."

Najib's absence and the low attendance in the House comes after the prime minister and BN took potshots at the opposition for [walking out](#) during last Friday's budget speech.

Najib said the opposition had embarrassed themselves, and turned their backs on the public.

Opposition leader Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail yesterday shot back by pointing out that her husband Anwar Ibrahim never missed an opposition leader's budget debate speech when he was the finance minister.

Najib was not present when she made those remarks.

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