

Urgent motion on bus crash accepted for debate
Malaysiakini.com
November 03, 2010

The Parliament has agreed to allow a debate on an emergency motion to discuss the alarming frequency of bus accidents.

NONEDAP Bakri parliamentarian Er Teck Hwa filed the motion on Monday and it was accepted by deputy speaker Ronald Kiandee on the grounds that the motion was specific, urgent and of public interest.

Kiandee has allocated one hour for debate with 30 minutes for the MPs to raise their qualms and 30 minutes for the relevant ministry to respond on the matter.

The debate is scheduled to take place at 4.30pm today.

Er filed his motion under Standing Orders 18(1) following the bus accident at Genting Sepah last week that killed seven people.

The MP had also previously filed a similar parliamentary motion on the fatal accident that killed 15 people and injured 40 others, in a crash involving two buses, a van and two cars, but it was rejected.

Er said that the frequency of bus accidents has raised public concerns, and he demanded that a royal commission be set up to probe the matter.

"The government's investigations into the accident has failed to curb the tragedy from recurring, and has failed to address public anxiety," he said.

No royal commission into tragedy

Later during the debate, Transport Minister Kong Cho Ha said the government did not plan to institute a royal commission of inquiry over the tragedy as accident prevention measures in the country were adequate.

"The steps taken by the government has borne fruit as the accident rate has been reduced despite there being more vehicles on the roads," Bernama reported him as saying.

He also said the percentage of road fatalities involving buses was also very small last year numbering 39 against a total of 6,287 fatalities in 2006, 75 out of 6,282 in 2007, 48 out of 6527 in 2008 and 31 out of 6745 last year.

However, he added, the government viewed the two tragedies seriously and was taking various countermeasures to ensure such tragedies did not recur and that they were being probed by the relevant agencies to determine the factors that contributed to them.

Er in his debate had ticked off the authorities for always pointing fingers at others whenever bus tragedies happened.

Countering this was Baharum Mohamed (BN-Sekijang) who said the government was doing its best to reduce the accident rate.

Others who took part in the debate were Loke Siew Fok (DAP-Rasah), Taib Azamudden (Pas-Baling), Hamim Samuri (BN-Ledang) serta P.Kamalanathan (BN-Hulu Selangor).

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