

BN backbenchers vow to attend all sittings

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THE Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club has vowed to stay in the House until the day's proceedings are over.

Acting BNBBC chairman, Datuk Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar, said members would abide by the BN whip's directive and ensure the Nov 16 incident involving the lack of quorum did not recur.

"This is our undertaking.

We will make sure this does not happen again in future sessions. We will be responsible," he said yesterday.

Yesterday, Minister in Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz, said BN Whip Datuk Seri Najib Razak had issued letters advising the 106 BN backbenchers to attend all sittings.

Warning letters were also

issued to the 20 parliamentary secretaries who were reprimanded during a meeting with the whip on Monday.

They were told that their job was to be in Parliament throughout proceedings.

The letters came after the House could not muster a quorum on Nov 16.

The quorum for a sitting to continue is 26 but only 21

members were present on Nov 16 when the call was made at 5pm. The failure to get the required numbers for a quorum forced deputy speaker Datuk Dr Yusof Yacob to adjourn sitting.

Meanwhile, Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang said better parliamentary attendance did not guarantee a higher quality of proceedings.

As an example, he alleged that front-benchers had provided inadequate answers when replying to questions posed by members.

"I call on the prime minister to ensure that ministers, deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries master their subjects when they come to Parliament to answer questions or reply during debates."