

Five DAP Assemblymen Walk Out In Protest, PAS Representative Stays Put
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MELAKA, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Five opposition assemblymen from the DAP staged a walkout in protest of state assembly speaker Datuk Othman Muhamad ordering Lai Keun Ban (DAP-Kota Laksamana) to leave the assembly hall.

However, their opposition counterpart from PAS, Dr Md Khalid Kassim (Bukit Baru) stayed put in the assembly hall to continue participating in the question-and-answer session during Thursday's sitting.

Dr Md Khalid's action won him praise from Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Idris Haron (BN-Sungai Udang), describing it as gentlemanly.

The other Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblymen also commended him, with Datuk Hasan Rahman (Sungai Rambai), in jest, even inviting Dr Md Kassim to join BN.

Earlier, Idris had replied to Lai's supplementary question on whether the opening of Jonker Street to traffic was politically motivated, that he had repeatedly stated that the move was to allow for smoother traffic flow in the area and it had also not affected tourist arrivals there.

Dissatisfied with the explanation, Lai insisted that the decision was politically motivated and a heated exchange of words ensued between the BN and DAP assemblymen.

To diffuse the situation, Othman advised Lai to be calm and to debate on the matter with decorum but Lai ignored the advice, causing Othman to order him out of the assembly hall for going against the standing order.

Opposition leader in the state assembly, Goh Leong San (DAP-Duyong) objected to Othman's action, saying it was unfair and led four other DAP assemblymen, Khoo Poay Tiong (Ayer Keroh), Lim Jak Wong (Bachang), Chin Choong Seong (Kesidang) and Tey Kok Kiew (Bandar Hilir) in staging a walkout.

When the question-and-answer session continued, Dr Md Khalid asked on the number of teachers of primary Islamic religious schools run by the Melaka Islamic Religious Department, with Idris replying there were 1,182 such teachers and they were all on contract.

Othman also allowed Dr Md Khalid, due to his medical expertise and as a former Melaka Hospital director, to state his opinion on the situation involving medical specialists in the state and on efforts to increase their number.

Later, when met by Bernama outside the assembly hall, he said he did not join the walkout by the five DAP assemblymen as he respected the standing order, adding that all assemblymen should understand and obey the standing order.

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