

## Questions of the Thai Members of the House of Representatives

The present Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand provides that Members of the House of Representatives may notify the Speaker of the House of Representatives in writing on the administration of the State affairs on any matter which involves an important problem of public concern, affects national or public interests or requires urgency.

The above-mentioned case is also prescribed in the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives as the oral question submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives prior to the commencement of the sitting of the day as the time determined by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In the Thai House of Representatives, a Member of the House of Representatives has the right to submit an oral question by specifying the title of the question and the Prime Minister or Minister to be questioned. Question times will take place on Thursdays during 08.30 hrs.- 10.00 hrs. During question time, Members are allowed to ask not more than three questions which will be placed on the agenda of that particular House session. If there are more than three questions, the Speaker of the House of Representatives will draw lots to take only three of them. After that, parliament staff will inform the Prime Minister or Minister being questioned to answer the question from 13.30 hrs. on the same day. The question and answer time for each session should not exceed 60 minutes.

Apart from oral questions, Members can also ask ordinary questions which are questions which will be submitted in writing to the Speaker of the House of Representatives in advance containing statements of fact or statements on policy matters specifying that the answers be made in the sitting of the House of Representatives. After the Speaker of the House of Representatives agrees to put the questions on the agenda of the House of Representatives, parliament staff will send the copy of the question to the Minister being questioned for preparations of answers to the questions as well as inform the Members posing the questions of the decision of the

Speaker of the House of Representatives within seven days. This type of question has to be placed on the agenda within 15 days from the date of delivery to the Minister.

Another type of question is the ordinary question requiring the answer to be published in the Government Gazette. After the Speaker of the House of Representatives agrees to put the questions on the agenda of the House of Representatives, parliament staff will send the copy of the question to the Minister being questioned to send written answers to the questions to the Prime Minister's Permanent Secretariat to publish in the Government Gazette within 30 days from the date of delivery to the Minister. After the written answer to the question has been published in the Government Gazette, the Minister will send a copy of the written answer to the Speaker of the House of Representatives to inform the Members who posed the question.

In addition, the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives indicate it is the responsibilities of the Prime Minister and Minister being questioned to attend the sitting of the House of Representatives to answer questions posed to them. Also, Members of the House of Representatives who ask the question are independent from any resolutions of political parties concerning the question.

However, according to the Constitution, the Minister has the right to refuse to answer the question if the Cabinet considers that the matter should not yet be disclosed publicly on the ground of safety or vital interest of the State.

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