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Zam among four sworn in as senators

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Former Utusan Melayu editor-in-chief Datuk Zainuddin Maidin, known to many as Zam, was among four people sworn in as senators before Dewan Negara President Tan Sri Mohamed Ya'acob at Parliament House today.

Zainuddin, 58, who is also the executive chairman of Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn Bhd, and former MP for Tawau Datuk Geoffrey Yee Lung Fook, 57, will serve their three-year term for the first time while Mastika Junaidah Husin, 44, and N. Marimutu, 52, were re-appointed for a second term.

Mastika from Arau, Perlis who graduated from Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (now Universiti Putra Malaysia) in 1975 with a Diploma in Agriculture was first appointed a Senator on Dec 9, 1994.

An active social worker and among the voluntary organisations she is involved in are: chairperson for the Perlis Womens' Affair Consultative Committee, a committee member of the State Pemadam, deputy chairman of the Pusat Serenti Visiting Board, Bukit Cabang and deputy chairman of the Parents-Teachers Association of the Sekolah Menengah Tuanku Syed Putra Parents.

She is married to Ramli Ahmad, and they have two children Riza Fahmi and Julie Azlina.

Marimutu who comes from Sungai Raja, Simpang Pulai is the MIC Gopeng divisional chairman and assistant secretary for the State MIC.

He is also an adviser to Ipoh Taxi Drivers Association and Gopeng Tamil Bell Club.

Marimutu was appointed a senator on Jan 1, 1995.

The swearing-in ceremony was witnessed by Dewan Negara deputy president Datuk Michael Chen, senators Datuk Mohd Zuki Kamaluddin, Datuk Dr T. Marimuthu, Habshah Osman and Toh Puan Wan Asiah Ahmad.

Among those present to congratulate Zainuddin on his appointment were his wife Datin Zaiton Zainor Abidin, 48, daughter Zakinah Zainuddin, 28, and son Zaidan Zainuddin, 18, New Straits Times Sdn Bhd group editor Datuk A. Kadir Jasin, Securities Commission chairman Datuk Dr Munir Majid and Utusan deputy group editor Khalid Mohamed.

Zainuddin, who has 38 years of journalistic experience, started his career as a stringer for Utusan Melayu in Alor Star from 1958 to 1960 before he joined the newspaper full-time.

A former president of the National Union of Journalist in the 1970s, Zainuddin was also the first Utusan Melayu correspondent in London (1975-76). He was editor-in-chief of the group from 1983 to 1992 and editorial adviser from November 1992 to August 1994 before being appointed executive chairman of Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn Bhd.

Zainuddin has written a number of books - The Other Side of Dr Mahathir, published in 1994, Yang Pertama dan Terakhir, Koleksi Terbaik Awang Selamat and Tun Razak: Jejak Bertapak Seorang Patriot.

Approached by reporters after his swearing in, Zainuddin said: "This is not only a personal honour but also to all journalists."

He said this also showed that the Government appreciates the co-operation from journalists and their critical writings.

Asked whether he would be critical in his approach to issues at the Dewan Negara, Zainuddin said: "If the need arises, I will be critical but I believe that a voice of moderation will be better."

He added that he would be able to contribute significantly to the Upper House with his wealth of experience gained as a journalist.

Yee, who had served as an MP from 1990-95, said he would raise the problems relating to illegal foreign workers in Sabah.

"It is a State right to send these illegal workers back to their countries," he said, adding that those issued with work permits be allowed to work.

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