

14/12/1999

Four-day sitting for Parliament

Ainon Mohd

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The first meeting of the first session of the 10th Parliament will be held for four days beginning Dec 20.

The Dewan Negara will meet on Dec 27 for two days.

The 2000 Budget is scheduled to be tabled for the first reading after the swearing-in ceremony.

Parliament public liaison officer Ahmad Asri Zakaria today said Members of Parliament would be notified of the meeting dates this week.

Besides this, four Bills will be tabled for the second and third reading and debated at the next sitting.

They are Income Tax (Amendment)(2) Bill 1999, Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill 1999, Supplementary Supply (1999) (2) 1999 Bill and Consolidated Fund Bill 1999.

The Institut Teknologi Mara (Amendment) 1999 Bill will also be tabled for first reading during the meeting.

There will not be any question and answer session.

When Parliament convenes for the swearing-in ceremony, there will be 148 Barisan Nasional MPs headed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

In the just-concluded election, the BN won two-thirds of the 193 seats contested.

The Opposition will have 45 seats compared to the previous 30.

Pas took 27 seats, followed by DAP with 10, Keadilan with five and the PBS with three.

In the 1995 election, Pas had seven seats, the DAP nine, PBS eight and the now defunct Parti Semangat 46 six seats.

Among the missing faces from the Opposition in Parliament this time will be DAP heavyweights, chairman Lim Kit Siang and deputy chairman Karpal Singh.

Those from the BN who failed to make it include former Second Finance Minister and Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, former Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob and former MP for Yan Datuk Badruddin Amiruldin.

Pas president Fadzil Noor will be Opposition Leader replacing Lim.

The Opposition Leader is usually given the privilege of speaking first and is allotted more time than other Opposition MPs.

This session will see Keadilan president Datin Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail making her debut in Parliament after she won the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat previously held by her husband Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The House will also appoint two new deputy speakers as one former Deputy Speaker, Datuk Ong Tee Keat, has been appointed Deputy Youth and Sports Minister while the other, Datuk Johar Mahiruddin, was not fielded as a candidate in the general election.

Ahmad Asri said seating arrangements for Ministers and MPs were being made.

The swearing-in of the MPs is expected to take about two hours, beginning with the Speaker, his two deputies and then the MPs.

In 1995, the first Parliament sitting was held in July, three months after the general election.

Meanwhile, the Dewan Negara, at its full strength, will have 69 Senators. Under the Federal Constitution, each State will be represented

by two Senators.

The King is empowered to appoint two representatives from the Federal Territory, one from Labuan and 40 others as Senators.

Of the 69 Senate seats, 16 are vacant. They will be appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong based on the names proposed by the respective State Legislative Assemblies.

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