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Emphasis on two plans at Dewan session

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PRECEDENCE will be given to the Eighth Malaysia Plan and the Third Outline Perspective Plan when the Dewan Rakyat sits again today.

The Third Outline Perspective Plan is expected to be tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on April 3 and will be debated by MPs for three days.

Dr Mahathir will also table the Eighth Malaysia Plan on April 23. It will be debated for four days. The Ministers will reply to the points raised on April 30.

The Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996 to 2000) expired last year.

MPs, including Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, who have been reminded by Dr Mahathir to carry out their responsibilities diligently by attending Parliamentary sittings religiously, need no reminder that their performance and participation in the Dewan Rakyat proceedings will be scrutinised.

(Dr Mahathir had said their performance would determine whether they would be chosen to defend their seats in the next general election.)

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah will open today's first meeting of the 10th Parliament's third term at Dataran Parlimen where he will inspect a guard-of-honour mounted by the Royal Malay Regiment's First Battalion from the Sungai Besi camp.

After meeting with the MPs, Ministers and other dignitaries, the King will deliver the Royal Address in the Dewan Rakyat.

The Dewan Rakyat sitting will go on for 25 days. The Dewan Negara meeting will start on May 8 and end on June 6.

Fourteen Bills are expected to be tabled at this session where five will be tabled for the first reading. The five are the Gas Supply (Amendment) Bill 2001, Postal Services (Amendment) Bill 2001, Digital Signatures (Amendment) Bill 2001, Co-operation (Amendment) Bill 2001 and Entertainment Duty (Amendment) Bill 2001.

The tabling of nine Bills which were postponed at the last session in December will also take place.

They are the Road Transport (Amendment) Bill 2000, Environment Quality (Amendment) Bill 2000, Malaysia Cocoa Board (Corporatisation) (Amendment) Bill 2000, Land Code (Amendment) Bill 2000, Electricity Supply (Amendment) Bill 2000, Food (Amendment) Bill 2000, Dental (Amendment) Bill 2000, Off-shore Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2000 and Strata Titles (Amendment) Bill 2000.

MPs had submitted a total of 1,156 oral and written questions for this session.

The oral questions will be answered during the daily question-and-answer session from 10am to 11am.

The debate on the Royal Address has been scheduled for five days until March 28 while the ministries have two days to reply to points raised by the MPs.

From April 10 until 19 and on May 2 and 3, the House will discuss other Government Bills.

With so many Government matters to be dealt with, it is hoped that MPs will do their utmost to carry out their responsibilities.

In the last session, Opposition MPs had staged a walkout before the tabling of the Budget and there were also challenges to a fist fight during a debate on a motion.

These only affected the good name of the august House.

The matters that have been mapped out for the session are serious as they deal with national development.

Therefore, MPs, be they from the BN or the Opposition, should start the session on the same serious note and ensure they maintain this attitude until the meeting ends.