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Parliament-RoundUp

DEWAN RAKYAT SESSION CREATES HISTORY OF SORTS FOR DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- After being in session for 42 days since Sept 2, the Dewan Rakyat adjourned sine die today, with history of sorts for former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

It was in this session for the last time before his retirement, Dr Mahathir, in his capacity as Finance Minister, tabled the 2004 Budget on Sept 12.

Many described the budget as the best ever to be presented, prompting the Opposition to see it as an election budget.

Tabling of the budget itself was a record as Dr Mahathir took about three hours to finish reading his speech.

This session also saw Dr Mahathir tabling the Mid-Term Review of the Eighth Malaysia Plan on Oct 30, the eve of his retirement.

On the same day, Dr Mahathir took several questions from Members of Parliament, on a serious note but in a cheerful mood, punctuated with jokes.

On Nov 3, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, three days after he was sworn in as Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister, succeeding Dr Mahathir, tabled a motion of thanks to Dr Mahathir who successfully steered the country for 22 years.

Abdullah, in his speech, praised Dr Mahathir's dedicated, firm, efficient, effective, excellent and credible leadership.

After that, Backbenchers' Club Chairman Datuk Mohd Zin Mohamad moved a motion, supporting Abdullah's appointment as Prime Minister.

He expressed confidence Malaysia would continue to prosper under Abdullah's leadership based on his background.

Abdullah hails from a religious family whose father was an influential politician in Penang.

Opposition members also supported Abdullah's appointment.

In the evening, Abdullah hosted a breaking of the fast for MPs and Parliament staff and led the maghrib, Isyak and Terawih prayers.

Speaking at the function, he urged MPs, including opposition members, to cooperate, regardless of their political leanings, for the interests of the nation, race and religion.

Several interesting and hot topics surfaced in this session, among others, the issue of 14 MPs making excessive travel claims, exceeding RM10,000 a month.

Mohd Apandi Mohamad (PAS-Jeli) topped the claimants' list, having filed claims for more than RM16,000 a month.

The issue cropped up when Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Noh Omar was replying to Datuk Othman Abdul (BN-Pendang) who wanted to know the number of MPs who claimed more than RM10,000.

The revelation received wide media publicity to the extent of triggering reaction from the Anti-Corruption Agency to investigate the matter.

-- BERNAMA

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