

Anwar, Karpal back in the House on Thursday

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Parliament could very well see a fresh round of action on Thursday, with the return of Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim (PKR-Permatang Pauh) from a six-month suspension.

Anwar was ejected last December after a majority vote in favour of a rights and privileges committee recommendation to suspend him on the ground that he had misled the House in a row involving the government's 1Malaysia campaign.

Three other senior opposition benchers – Karpal Singh (DAP-Bukit Gelugor), Azmin Ali (PKR-Gombak) and R Sivarasa (PKR-Subang) – will also come back from suspension for their role in the pandemonium that followed Anwar's suspension.

Anwar had said that his suspension was a “flagrant abuse of power” by Umno, whose MPs happen to take up the majority of seats in Parliament.

His case was brought before the Parliamentary rights and privileges committee for claiming that international public relations firm Apco Worldwide had links with the Israeli and Malaysian governments.

Anwar implied that a deal between Apco and the Israeli government led to the latter's adoption of the One Israel slogan – allegedly similar to Apco's involvement in helping Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak develop the 1Malaysia campaign.

Rowdiest day ever

The day of Anwar's suspension counts as one of the rowdiest parliamentary sessions in the history of Malaysia, as backbenchers and opposition members launched into a half-hour shouting match with no regard for the speaker or decorum.

Opposition benchers even unfurled hastily-made placards made of Manila paper in the House, in direct violation of the Standing Orders, before staging a mass walkout in protest against the decision.

With his penchant for political showmanship and stinging jibes, it would not be wrong to assume that Anwar just might dive in and stir the hornet's nest yet again on his first day back to the House.

The same could be said for Karpal - no stranger to getting ejected - who has, over his five terms as MP, never shied away from challenging the speaker or needling the backbenchers whenever the opportunity arose.

Whether they will actually shake up proceedings remains to be seen, but one thing is sure; it will be a super-charged day as their peers, and everyone else, wait in anticipation of fireworks.