

Monday to see history in the making at Parliament
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The third meeting and fourth session of the 12th Malaysian Parliament which will commence on Monday, is anticipated to create a history of sorts for various reasons.

Firstly, after 51 years, the dreaded Internal Security Act (ISA) is finally on its way out as its proposed repeal would likely be raised during the session.

Secondly, it would also be the first time that the meeting would be held in another premises, albeit temporarily, since the Parliament building was officiated on Nov 2, 1963.

The temporary venue located next to the Parliament building, and which had been a multipurpose hall, was upgraded at a cost of RM28 million to accommodate both the Senate and Dewan Rakyat.

The move was necessary to enable renovations of the entire structure which is almost five decades old.

Incidentally, the new venue is smaller, which would inevitably seat members nearer to each other and likely motivate a more lively debate, especially during a war of words among the members.

Thirdly, at the new venue next Friday, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is scheduled to table the 2012 budget, believed to be the last in the 12th Parliament before it is dissolved for the 13th general elections, expected to be soon.

Many are anticipating a "pleasant surprise" in the 2012 budget, dubbed 'Election Budget', amidst rumours that Najib was going to raise the salary for civil servants this year.

Meanwhile, Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, touching on the ISA repeal, thinks the bill would be tabled with the other bills during the session.

"Even if it were not, then the government has all the time from Oct 3 until mid-December," he told Bernama.

On the assumption that the ISA bill would effect a heated debate, he said it depended on the members.

parliament opposition mps dispute najib budget 051108 wan junaidi "It is a good thing for everybody and for the sake of the country's image. I don't see the necessity to go ho-ha over it," he said.

Fourthly, apart from the ISA, the government is also expected to propose the repeal of the Banishment Act 1959 and do away with the yearly renewal of the printing press permit, as required under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

The Act would be replaced with a licence that remains valid unless cancelled.

Come Monday, at the Parliament lobby, Malaysian Trades Union Congress members may be picketing, as they had warned earlier, if the government failed to table the proposed amendment to the Employment Act 1955.

The bill was first tabled in Parliament on July 8, last year but withdrawn, based on feedback from various quarters.

- Bernama

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