

Anwar mulls boycott of Parliament's opening session

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Pakatan Rakyat supremo Anwar Ibrahim is mulling the issue of a probable boycott of the opening session of the 13th Parliament to back widespread suspicions over the legitimacy of the May 5 general election and has refused to submit parliamentary questions.

The deadline for the submission of questions for ministerial replies in the session that opens on June 24 passed on Wednesday.

NONEPermatang Pauh MP Anwar did not submit any questions - a matter that is certain to come in for criticism by detractors from across the aisle.

"Politics is also a matter of perception and the widespread perception is that GE13 was tainted by fraud broad enough for us to mull the option of whether to boycott the opening session," said Anwar, who is likely to be proposed as parliamentary opposition leader despite his party, PKR, trailing coalition partner DAP in the seats tally.

The role traditionally goes to the leader of the party that gains the most seats among the opposition.

DAP garnered 38 federal seats to PKR's 30 at the May 5 polls. PAS, the third partner in the Pakatan triad, secured 21 seats.

Two-week deadline too long

Anwar said his non-submission of questions was also prompted by a desire to protest the two-week deadline of acceptance of questions for ministerial reply which he described as "unwarrantedly long."

"You have a three-workday deadline for submission in legislatures around the world. The British Parliament has it and so do several others," he remarked.

"Two weeks is too long a deadline for a matter of this nature. Political developments spurt and twist such that you frame a question on an issue today, it is rendered obsolete by ongoing events by the time it is answered more than two weeks down the road.

"Wasn't it Harold Wilson who remarked a week is a long time in politics? What more two weeks!" mused Anwar.

Former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson is famed for the bon mot - "A week is a long time in politics" - which famously encapsulated the futility of prognostication on a medium as fluid as politics.

Before the opening session of the 12th Parliament in April 2008, several newly elected PKR legislators were caught flat-footed by their failure to submit questions by the two-week deadline before Parliament opened.

The failure was attributable to their status as neophytes learning the ropes rather than in the case of Anwar who is a veteran legislator of three - albeit interrupted - decades' standing.

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