

Parliament secretary: Voting for speaker via 'letter ballot'

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By Hazlan Zakaria

The voting for Dewan Rakyat speaker will be conducted via "letter ballot", said the parliament secretary, though she refused to specify if it is secret or not.

NONE "It will be conducted via letter ballot," said parliament secretary Rosmee Hamzah (left).

However, she refused to comment on whether the ballot will be secret or not, saying that she does not want the matter to be made into an issue.

"Please refer to Standing Order 4," Rosmee said when pressed further, explaining that since its founding, that was how parliament conducted the voting for speaker.

According to Standing Order 4(4), "letter ballot" means that each MP will be given a piece of paper to write down the name of the person they are voting to be speaker, and the paper to be folded until the name written on it cannot be read, and then signed by each MP.

Standing Order 4(5) specifies that the ballots shall then be collected by the secretary or an appointed official and counted in front of the assembly and the result read out by the secretary.

She also confirmed that more than two names have been nominated for the speaker position, but refused to comment further.

The BN is re-nominating outgoing speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia, while Pakatan has named former Federal Court judge Abdul Kadir Sulaiman for the post.

PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim had urged a secret ballot for the voting for the speaker's post.

Change in Pakatan seat arrangement

At the same press conference, Rosmee also revealed that there will be a change on how the seats on the opposition side of the House will be arranged.

"Unlike previously, they will not be sitting en bloc by party," she said.

Rosmee explained that the opposition pact had written to her requesting that instead of their seats being arranged by individual parties, the Pakatan MPs will be arranged by their seniority in the pact.

Anwar will take the seat closest to the speaker in the front row, followed by PAS' Marang MP Abdul Hadi Awang, DAP's Gelang Patah rep Lim Kit Siang and DAP's Bagan MP Lim Guan Eng, and so on.

Other Pakatan MPs will be spaced out in subsequent rows by seniority.

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