

Next speaker to inherit an 'interesting' Parliament
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It is not known who the next speaker will be but it is guaranteed this person will inherit a Parliament with many 'unique' factors, said caretaker speaker Ramli Ngah Talib. MCPX

parliament briefing 030408 ramli ngah talibHe told a press conference at his Parliament office after officiating a briefing session for new parliamentarians today that he had no idea who the next speaker will be.

"I don't know. This will only be decided on April 28. But I am re-elected, then yes, if necessary. I am willing to do it," he said.

Ramli 67, noted that the 12th parliamentary session has several unique instances including the largest opposition presence in the august house.

"There are 99 new MPs from a total of 222 seats or 45 percent. In the previous term, the opposition only made up of 20 opposition and one independent MPs, or 10 percent," he explained.

parliament briefing 030408 tian chua khairy jamaluddinAccording to Ramli, it was on this basis that a comprehensive closed-door briefing for new MPs was organised to introduce the workings of Parliament to them.

"This includes giving them the e-book (on rules and procedures) and important basic information including their rights as a parliamentarian.

"We also briefed them about allowances and claims for hotel accommodation," he said.

A total of 136 MPs both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat attended today's briefing.

Already the different in atmosphere in the new parliament is palpable with PKR MP for Batu Tian Chua rubbing shoulders with Umno MP for Rembau, Khairy Jamaluddin.

First mother-daughter team

Another record in this coming parliamentary session is having the first mother-and-daughter team in Parliament - Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (PKR-Permatang Pauh) and her daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar (PKR-Lembah Pantai).

parliament briefing 030408 ladies"We've had father-and-son teams before so this is an interesting record," he mused.

He added that BN also made history as the party to have ruled the country for 50 years since independence.

Asked to comment on how the new session could be like, the former Pasir Salak parliamentarian says it depends on the subject.

parliament briefing 030408 tian khairy 2He also pointed out that the task as a speaker is not as easy as it seems with the work taking up half a year and some sessions lasting through the night.

"When Parliament is not in session, it doesn't mean I'm not working. I still work for example in committees, meetings, preparations and notice.

"Challenges include controlling the session. It does not mean I'm preventing them from speaking but more so that they can be given an optimum chance to speak. Also I tried my best to ensure that the house is not boring," he said.

parliament 2008 numbers and percentage of seatsQuizzed on his most memorable moment in Parliament, Ramli smiled and said: "It's just normal. I'm a normal man."

Ramli became the seventh Dewan Rakyat speaker in November 2004. He was assisted by deputy speakers Lim Si Cheng and Yusof Yacob before Parliament was dissolved on Feb 13 this year.

The procedure in selecting the speaker and deputy speakers posts begin with nominations from any MP and notice must be given to the Dewan Rakyat secretary 14 days before the first session takes place.

While the deputy speakers must be from the MPs elected from both BN or PR, the speaker can be anybody.

After nominations, MPs will vote for the three posts. This is expected to take place on April 28 when Parliament begins its 12th session.

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