

All smiles for first-time MPs
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 3, 2008
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The banquet hall was abuzz as parliamentarians trickled in for a briefing session at the legislative house this morning and the expressions were telling - excitement was in the air. MCPX

In the political tsunami that swept 82 seats and five state governments to Pakatan Rakyat, there are more new members of Parliament than ever before which resulted in a special briefing session on rules and decorum to be held today.

Although reporters were barred from the banquet hall where the briefing took place, photographers went into a frenzy and grabbed the opportunity to snap sights that would have been near-impossible prior to the elections.

parliament briefing 030408 tian chua khairy jamaluddinOne of them included Khairy Jamaluddin (BN-Rembau) standing next to Tian Chua (PR-Batu) in conversation, appearing amused by the attention for a fleeting moment (right).

Showdowns are expected to take place between ruling coalition Barisan Nasional parliamentarians with the opposition drawing which includes the most prominent and promising political personalities into the spotlight.

The 12th Parliament session begins on April 28.

Malaysiakini speaks to a few first-time MPs to quiz them on how they feel. Between their ear-to-ear smiles, here are their answers:

Nurul Izzah Anwar (Lembah Pantai)

Surprisingly I am not as excited today (laughs). I was more excited during the 1999 General Election because my mum was elected then. So at least I am used to Parliament in certain aspects. It is interesting to see so many faces especially friendly ones so this gives me some hope. Of course I am elated because it was such a big win. I share the happiness with everyone else.

S Manickavasagam (Kapar)

I'm not emotional or anything but I am just waiting to go into Parliament on the first day for the debate. I've been here a few times to hand over memorandums but this time the people has chosen me as MP. I think there is a lot of work to do for the community and the people.

parliament briefing 030408 jeff ooiJeff Ooi (Jelutong)

I feel excited. I've stepped into Parliament a few times mostly on the select committee and forum organised by the former opposition leader Lim Kit Siang on water management issues.

I used to talk about governance issues over the past five years in my blog so this is just a different platform so that whatever input that I share would be part of the legislative process.

I think that is very meaningful. The first question I'm going to ask concerns the Energy, Water and Communications Ministry about the telecommunications industry.

Dr Hatta Ramli (Kuala Krai)

Surely anyone of us should feel proud in a way but knowing the responsibility that we carry on our shoulder we foresee that there will be a lot of things to do in this august house representing the people of my constituency, party and the rest of the country. But having been here before as an officer with the opposition leader (the late Fadzil Noor of PAS) I'm quite familiar with the running of Parliament. The only thing is to see whether I can be a good speaker or present myself well.

In the last session in the 11th Parliament, I was on the way to the building but I got arrested outside the gate. That was on Dec 10, I think and that was the last time I came to Parliament where I ended up in the hall of the Kuala Lumpur police contingent rather than the hall of the Parliament (laughs).

Nga Kor Ming (Pantai Remis)

I felt it is a great honour to enter this august house as I have always consider this place as the highest chamber for debates and this is the place where the voice of the people will be heard especially with 82 opposition members for the first time in history. We believe that with this Pakatan Rakyat, we can build a two-party system which is healthy for the democratic development in our country.

Johari Abdul (Sungai Petani)

First I would like to pray to God. We believe when reformasi happened back in 1998, that one day the people would be able to send the right representatives and say what they want to determine what they want.

I am very excited now I have the opportunity to say what we have been keeping inside and we want to expose whatever we have to correct things immediately. This is the place to expose them and this is the place to get an answer.