

Anwar: Opposition to defend Speaker and deputy

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SHAH ALAM: Despite the disagreement in the prime minister's candidate, Pakatan Harapan and other Opposition bloc will unite to defend the Dewan Rakyat Speaker and his deputy when Parliament reconvenes today, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Opposition leader said the decision was based on principles and the rule of law.

"It has never happened in the history of the Commonwealth and our country (to replace the existing Speaker). A new appointment will only take place when there is a vacancy or when the Speaker resigns.

"I hope the majority of MPs will accept and retain the Speaker. Based on his performance, I am confident the MPs will make a wise and sound decision," he said after a pre-Parlia-

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

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ment briefing for Pakatan MPs at a hotel here yesterday.

When asked if he and ousted Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be able to reconcile despite their differences, Anwar said there was nothing personal.

"As far as I am concerned, I look at issues of policies and reform

agendas. Anyone, including Tun, if we can agree, then we will proceed. There is no problem. Nothing personal here," he said.

A motion is expected to be tabled for former Election Commission chairman Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun to replace Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof.

Mohamad Ariff, who confirmed this, said the motion would form part of the Order Paper listing debates and motions to be held when lawmakers reconvene today.

On June 26, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin submitted the motions for the removal of Mohamad Ariff as well as his deputy Nga Kor Ming. Pengerang MP Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said is tipped to replace Nga.

During a recent meeting, Perikatan Nasional was said to have agreed to nominate Azhar and Azalina to replace Mohamad Ariff and Nga.

According to House rules, Azhar and Azalina's names must be submitted to the Dewan Rakyat 14 days before its meeting.

Pakatan secretariat chief Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said yesterday's meeting was attended by all 91 Pakatan MPs.

Dr Mahathir and Parti Warisan Sabah president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal were not present.

When asked about this, Anwar said an informal meeting with Warisan and Dr Mahathir's faction took place earlier.

"These matters were discussed. They will jointly support the Opposition's position.

"This is purely a Pakatan event but there is a cordial working relationship," he said, adding that the meeting also focused, among other things, on the next general election.

When asked whether Pakatan would support the motion to hold a vote of no confidence against

Muhyiddin, Anwar said they would focus on the Speaker issue first.

"As we know, the issue is stuck. It is at the bottom and quite hard for us to anticipate the debate.

"We will prioritise government matters and focus on the appointment of the Speaker," he said.

Separately, Saifuddin said there would be 108 MPs on the Opposition bloc when Dewan Rakyat reconvenes today.

In a letter dated May 4, Dr Mahathir proposed to move a motion under the Dewan Rakyat's Standing Order 26(1), read together with Standing Order 27(3), to put forward a resolution to decide that Muhyiddin does not enjoy the support of the majority of MPs in the Dewan Rakyat.

The motions to remove Mohamad Ariff and Nga are listed as No. 2 and 3 on the Order Paper, while the no-confidence motion against Muhyiddin is at No. 27.

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