

The rising stars in Parliament after GE13

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In our series to mark the first anniversary of the most heated general election in recent memory, The Malaysian Insider sizes up some of the newly minted MPs who have captured the people's imagination.

They are rising stars from both sides of the divide, who, in their first term in Parliament, are already known for rocking the boat with their outspoken advocacy on transparency, efficiency and good governance.

The Malaysian Insider checks out the record of some of the new parliamentarians.

Rafizi Ramli

The Pandan MP and PKR strategist was catapulted into the spotlight with his expose on the RM250 million National Feedlot Corporation cattle scandal that led to the eventual resignation of an Umno minister.

In Parliament, he has been vocal on many issues, articulating them in a focussed manner rather than indulging in grandstanding.

Among his notable "achievements" was halting Putrajaya's plan to impose a 12-year lifespan on cars, which he and fellow PKR MP Sim Tze Tzin charged that it was the government's way of collecting more revenue through the Good and Services Tax (GST) that would take off in April 2015.

He is currently embroiled in revealing the abuse of a RM100 million research and development (R&D) federal grant to a company allegedly favoured by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Sim Tze Tzin

PKR's Bayan Baru MP and former Pantai Jerejak assemblyman won the admiration of the media covering parliamentary proceedings when he introduced himself to each and every member of the press and added them to a Whatsapp group to keep them abreast of the latest happenings.

A transport engineer with a Masters in Transportation from California's San Jose University, Sim's pet subjects in the Dewan Rakyat are naturally, public transport, housing, local governance and construction, which he raises in an earnest and polite manner.

Dr Ong Kian Ming

DAP's Serdang MP is an academician-turned-politician who is a strong advocate of the three Es – education, electoral reforms and renewable energy.

On education issues, Ong has criticised Putrajaya on the student assessment system, the RM20 million price tag to hire consultants for the National Education Blueprint and the declining educational standards as evidenced by the country's plunging ranking in international assessment tests.

On electoral reforms, Ong is a strong proponent of the "one person one vote" system and had called for an independent committee to handle the upcoming redelineation exercise.

He had even called for the resignation of the minister in charge of parliamentary affairs, Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim, for suggesting that voting should be along racial lines, and said the proposal was akin to "electoral apartheid".

On renewable energy, Ong has consistently questioned Sustainable Energy Development Authority (Seda)'s renewable energy feed-in tariff scheme, the latest being the need to increase the surcharge of renewable energy by 0.6% this year when Seda only managed to meet 56% of its quota.

Mohamed Hanipa Maidin

Lawyer Hanipa, PAS's Sepang MP, is vocal on law-related matters, such as the amendments to the contentious Prevention of Crime Act (PCA), which allows for preventive detention, and the Security Offences (Special Measure) Act.

He also has a special interest in the education issues, and put Putrajaya on the defensive when he questioned whether the Education Ministry was in denial over the performance of Malaysian students in international assessment tests.

Like his opposition colleagues, he has been thrown out of Parliament a few times and in October last year, narrowly escaped being referred to

Parliament's Rights and Privileges Committee for saying that Datuk Seri Najib Razak was anti-Chinese. His retraction and apology were accepted by the Speaker.

Datuk Ahmad Fauzi Zahari

In a rare show of a BN lawmaker going against the establishment, the BN Setiawangsa MP took centre stage when he protested against Kuala Lumpur City Hall's plan to raise property valuation, which many had claimed would increase assessment rates by 100% to 1,000%.

His constituents are affected by the proposal and there were vehement objections by city dwellers and opposition MPs.

Ahmad Fauzi slammed City Hall and said the authorities should have consulted the people before making such an abrupt decision. He also urged the Election Commission to reconsider its suggestion to introduce a shorter polling process.

Datuk Irmohizam Ibrahim

BN's Kuala Selangor MP was a relative unknown who scored an upset when he unseated PAS's Dr Dzulkifly Ahmad last year. As a trustee of youth organisation IM4U, the 38-year-old former law lecturer has been described as articulate and earned the respect of the opposition for pushing his points across without resorting to rabble rousing. His topics of debate include youth, legal and agricultural matters.

Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani

The BN Titiwangsa MP teamed up with his party comrade from Setiawangsa to cross party lines in opposing the controversial assessment rate hikes for Kuala Lumpur dwellers earlier this year.

He has also spoken out against Putrajaya's move to cut subsidies, arguing that it would further burden urban dwellers who were already facing a spiralling cost of living and increases in the price of goods and services. Johari, who is the chair of the Urban Development Authority (UDA), has also highlighted the lack of affordable housing in Kuala Lumpur for low and middle-income groups and voiced his concerns over spiralling property prices. – May 5, 2014.

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