

## **Monday's Much-awaited Opening Of New Parliament**

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**By Kurniawati Kamarudin**

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- With 90 new Members of Parliament making their debut at the Dewan Rakyat on Monday - the biggest ever number of new faces in the nation's parliamentary history - a great deal of excitement will be in the air as the brand new 'Yang Berhormats' feel their way and try to make their mark in the august House.

The opening of the 14th Parliament will also be a historic moment because for the first time in 60 years Barisan Nasional will sit on the opposition bench having been unseated by Pakatan Harapan in the 14th General Election on May 9.

All eyes will be on the PH MPs, who are the voice of the new Malaysia, as the people are eager to see their elected representatives in action in the Dewan Rakyat.

### **PROCEEDINGS TO START WITH APPOINTMENT OF SPEAKER**

The first meeting of the first session of the 14th Parliament will run for 20 days between July 16 and Aug 16. The proceedings on the first day will begin with Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad tabling the first motion for the election of the Dewan Rakyat Speaker, whose identity has yet to be revealed.

Over the last three weeks, several names had cropped up as possible candidates for the post, including retired judge Datuk Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof who is being seen as the most qualified person for the crucial post.

The speaker's oath-taking ceremony will be followed by the swearing-in of the 222 MPs in front of the newly-appointed speaker. The Prime Minister will be the first person to take his

oath, followed by his deputy, Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and the remaining MPs.

Next will be the appointment of the two deputy speakers consisting of MPs from the government bench.

On Tuesday, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V will officially open the first session of the 14th Parliament.

Speaking to the media after a full-dress rehearsal of the opening ceremony at Parliament House today, Dewan Rakyat secretary Datuk Roosme Hamzah said the speaker's election would be the main item in the order of the day.

When pressed by reporters to reveal the name of the person the government has nominated for the post, she replied that it was confidential.

"The proceedings will start when I read out the proclamation of the Dewan Rakyat's opening, after which the Prime Minister will table the motion for the election of the speaker," she said.

## **OPPOSITION LEADER**

The media members who attended today's full-dress rehearsal had the opportunity to enter the Dewan Rakyat to take a look at the last-minute preparations there but, unfortunately, the MPs' seating arrangements were still vague as their names have not been displayed yet to indicate where they would sit.

As such, the name of the MP who will serve as the opposition leader still remains a mystery.

In nations practising parliamentary democracy, the right side of the speaker is allotted to the government and its supporters with the first seat reserved for the Prime Minister, followed by his deputy and members of his Cabinet. The first chair on the left side of the

speaker is usually reserved for the opposition leader and the remaining seats, for the opposition party MPs.

Roosme, who in 2007 became the first woman to be appointed as Dewan Rakyat secretary, said preparing for the first session of the 14th Parliament has been very challenging.

"Although the GE14 results have been finalised, we are still working out the seating arrangements.

"Some of the MPs had contested as independent candidates during the election but now they have applied to become members of certain parties including PKR. There are also some opposition MPs who have resigned from their parties and are now independent members," she said.

Nevertheless, she expects the parliamentary sessions to be more interesting this time around as the Dewan Rakyat now has 90 first-time MPs, as well as 121 lawmakers from the 13th Parliament and 11 MPs who are returning to the august House.

Dr Mahathir, 93, who is MP for Langkawi, and P. Prabakaran, 22, who is MP for Batu, will also create history for being the nation's oldest and youngest MP respectively.

PKR president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (MP for Pandan), meanwhile, has also created history by being the first woman to be appointed Deputy Prime Minister.

## **PROPOSED MOTIONS**

Several motions are expected to be tabled at the first meeting of the 14th Parliament. They include the proposed motions seeking the abolishment of the Anti-Fake News Act 2018, Goods and Services Tax Act 2014 and Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012.

The Anti-Fake News Act was passed on April 1 this year and was aimed at restricting the

dissemination of fake news while the Goods and Services Tax Act was passed on April 7, 2014, to impose a GST of six per cent. The GST was zero-rated on June 1 after Pakatan Harapan took over the federal government.

Roosme also said that the Dewan Rakyat secretariat has received many questions from the MPs to be presented at Question Time during the daily sittings.

She also hoped that the MPs would comply with the Standing Orders and discharge their duties in a disciplined manner in the august House.

*Translated by Rema Nambiar BERNAMA*

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