

Opposition walkout over election of Dewan Rakyat Speaker

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 16 (Bernama) -- Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and several Barisan Nasional and PAS MPs staged a walkout from the Dewan Rakyat today, protesting that the election of the Speaker did not follow procedure.

The House had convened today for the first meeting of the first session of the 14th Parliament, and it proceeded with the business of electing Datuk Mohamad Ariff Yusof as the new Speaker after he was nominated by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and seconded by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

There were no other nominations.

Ahmad Zahid, who is the MP for Bagan Datuk, said the nomination by the Pakatan Harapan government of the former Court of Appeal judge as the Speaker did not adhere to the required 14-day notice for the nomination.

He said the opposition had adequate proof that the notice for nomination did not meet the 14-day stipulated requirement.

Although the Dewan Rakyat secretary (Datuk Roosme Hamzah) had informed that the Leader of the House, the Prime Minister (Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad), had sent the letter to the Dewan Rakyat secretary on July 2, we have adequate proof that the 14-day notice as stipulated in the Dewan Rakyat Standing Orders was not followed, he said to reporters at the lobby of Parliament.

Hardly 10 minutes after the Dewan Rakyat convened and when Roosme was reading out the proclamation of the Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat, Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan (PAS-Kota

Bharu) stood up and questioned the legitimacy of the election, citing Standing Orders 4.1.

Standing Orders 4.1 states that every member who wishes to propose a person who is either a member of the House or is qualified for election as such for election as Yang di-Pertua (Speaker) shall ascertain previously that, that member is willing to serve if elected, and shall notify the Setiausaha (Secretary) of his proposal in writing at least fourteen days before the meeting.

The situation became a little chaotic when more opposition MPs objected to the proclamation, but the process of electing the Speaker continued unabated.

Opposition BN and PAS MPs then expressed criticism and walked out of the House in protest.

Tan Sri Annuar Musa (BN-Ketereh) said the opposition did not boycott Parliament but did not wish to be a part of the process which did not adhere to procedure.

We had an option, to just sit (in the House) when something wrong was taking place or leave, he said, adding that they did not agree with the government ignoring the law.

Parliament is a place where we have to follow protocol, it is not a circus or platform to take revenge, he said.

Takiyuddin claimed that the election of the Speaker was in violation of the Standing Orders of the Dewan Rakyat.

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