

New senate president Rais Yatim no stranger to legislative branch

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 -- The new Dewan Negara president Senator Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim is a figure who is no stranger to the legislative branch, one of the three main branches of separation of powers in the country besides the executive and judiciary.

Rais, 78, has been a member of Parliament for six terms and a state assemblyman for a term.

In the executive field, Rais was the Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan (1978-1982) and a Cabinet minister (1983-1987 and 1999-2013).

He was today appointed Senate president, replacing Tan Sri S.A.Vigneswaran whose term ended on June 22.

The Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan-born Rais, a figure known in cultural circles, graduated with a Master of Laws from the University of London and a diploma in psychology from Northern Illinois University, in the United States, began his career as a teacher before becoming a lecturer at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

Rais then began to “train” in politics by being the parliamentary secretary in the Culture, Youth and Sports Ministry, from 1974 to 1976, before being deputy minister of Law (1976-1977), and then deputy minister of Home Affairs (1977-1978).

His qualifications and prominence received the attention of the then prime minister Tun Hussein Onn and this enabled him to be appointed Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan for five years, from 1978, before being appointed Land and Regional Development Minister in 1983.

Rais continued to serve in the Cabinet during the time of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Among the ministries he has helmed include the Ministry of Information, Foreign Affairs as well as Culture, Arts and Heritage, and his last position in the Cabinet as Minister of Information, Communications, Arts and Culture.

He is currently Negeri Sembilan Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) chairman and was sworn in as a senator on June 16.

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