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Pic: by Rizak Ghazali

NO RUBBING ELBOWS: Today will be Perikatan Nasional's 1st Parliament sitting since Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin took office on March 1, following a week of power struggle in Putrajaya. All MPs and senators are allowed to be physically present for the royal address, although strict social distancing rules will apply. SEE ALSO P6

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New composition of seats in Dewan Rakyat

It marks the return of BN on the right side of the lower house that was voted out of power in May 2018

by DASHVEENJIT KAUR & ALIFAH ZAINUDDIN

THE long-awaited parliamentary sitting will resume today with a new composition of seats in the Dewan Rakyat after a near six-month hiatus since it was adjourned on Dec 5 last year.

Prime Minister (PM) Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and the members of his two-month-old Cabinet will take hold of the government front bench — marking the return of Barisan Nasional (BN) on the right side of the lower house. The long-ruling coalition was voted out of power in May 2018.

Pakatan Harapan lawmakers, including Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, will occupy the Opposition bench, making the latter the second former PM to sit on the left side of the house after Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak.

Muhyiddin's appointment as Malaysia's 8th PM on March 1 triggered a tidal wave of change which has seen over a third of parliamentarians appointed as ministers or filling top positions at government-linked companies (GLCs) and agencies as he attempts to consolidate control over the Parliament.



Despite the spate of appointments at GLCs and agencies, the share of parliamentary seats remains a guessing game

Data compiled by *The Malaysian Reserve (TMR)* show the appointment of at least 87 MPs, with the most recent involving PAS backbencher Sabri Aziz as chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books and Igan MP Ahmad Johnie Zawawi as Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd chairman.

Some major appointments were earlier seen at the Federal Land Development Authority, Tenaga Nasional Bhd and Majlis

Amanah Rakyat, among others, concerning Besut MP Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, Padang Besar MP Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Beaufort MP Datuk Azizah Mohd Dun respectively.

Speculation is also rife that at least eight other appointments will be made including Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Tengku Mohd Hamzah as chairman of Petroliaam Nasional Bhd. The Gua Musang MP was the founding chairman and CEO of the oil and

gas giant in the early 1970s.

High-profile names that have been notably left out so far include Najib, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and former Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor who are all facing trial in court for corruption.

Perikatan Nasional — which is made up of BN, Pribumi and PAS — has 89 MPs, according to the latest count. It also has the support of 18 Gabungan Parti Sarawak MPs

and three Gabungan Bersatu Sabah MPs which gives the ruling alliance command over 110 seats. However, the situation remains fluid.

A simple majority in the Parliament requires 112 seats. It is believed that Muhyiddin had at least 113 out of 222 votes when he was sworn in as PM. Still, it should be noted that parliamentary democracy does not require a majority government. A minority government is possible, though it has never been tried in Malaysia.

Despite the spate of appointments, the share of parliamentary seats remains a guessing game. Singapore Institute of International Affairs senior fellow Dr Oh Ei Sun, however, is confident that Muhyiddin's strategy will translate into support. "You can't bite the hand that feeds you," he told TMR.

Political analyst Prof Dr Hoo Ke Ping said patronage appointments have been a binding practice in Malaysia amid calls for change. He expects it to continue for years to come.

"Most people would agree that patronage politics need to stop on grounds of corruption. But what people fail to see is corruption has nothing to do with crony capitalism. It can still happen with or without a politician at the helm," he said. In the end, Hoo said it boils down to how well the nation performs in terms of economic growth and distribution of wealth.

VALUATOR

Company(Brand)	Mention	Tone	ROI
100 days (100 days)	2	0	RM 0
Agensi Inovasi Malaysia (Dato Sri Haji Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji	1	0	RM 0
Barisan Nasional (BN) (Barisan Nasional (BN))	4	0	RM 0
Bername - MREM (Bernama - MREM 5)	1	0	RM 0
CIMB Investment Bank Berhad (CIMB - Economy News)	1	0	RM 0
Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC - Stakeholders)	1	0	RM 0
FastJobs - Employment News (For Perspective) (FastJobs -	1	0	RM 0
Federal Land Development Authority (Federal Land Development	1	0	RM 0
Indah Water Konsortium (Indah Water Konsortium)	3	0	RM 0
Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia (ITBM) (Institut Terjemahan &	1	0	RM 0
Malaysia General Election (Malaysia General Election)	2	0	RM 0
Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) (Singapore Top	1	0	RM 0
Ministry of Federal Territories (Ministry of Federal Territories)	1	0	RM 0
Pakatan Harapan (Pakatan Harapan)	1	0	RM 0
Parliament of Malaysia (Parliament)	12	0	RM 0
Parti Islam SeMalaysia (Parti Islam SeMalaysia)	2	0	RM 0
Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) (Parti Pribumi Bersatu	1	0	RM 0
Pertubuhan Berita Nasional Malaysia (Bernama)	1	0	RM 0
Pertubuhan Berita Nasional Malaysia (Pertubuhan Berita Nasional	1	0	RM 0
Petroleum Nasional Berhad (PETRONAS) (PETRONAS)	1	0	RM 0
Sarawak (Sarawak)	1	0	RM 0
Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) (Tenaga Nasional)	1	0	RM 0
Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad (Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad)	2	0	RM 0
UMNO (UMNO)	2	0	RM 0