

Judul : Speakership: Parties Prepare Members for House, MPR Deputy Speaker Posts
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SPEAKERSHIP

Parties prepare members for House, MPR deputy speaker posts

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After the House of Representatives passed the Legislative Institutions (MD3) Law last week, several factions are now touting their most influential members to sit on the speakership boards of the House and the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).

The passing of the law, which contained several controversial articles deemed by some as measures to silence critics, also opened a slot for one more deputy speaker in the House. The vacancy will be filled by a lawmaker from the ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) as stipulated in the revised law. Meanwhile, the PDI-P, the Na-

tional Awakening Party (PKB) and the Gerindra Party will also send their respective representatives to fill three more seats as MPR deputy speakers.

The PDI-P has touted chairman Utut Ardianto to fill the new slot. However, his appointment was pending a decision from party matriarch Megawati Soekarnoputri, party executive Eva Kusuma Sundari said.

If Utut is appointed, he will join the speakership board made up of Golkar – whose cadre Bambang Soesatyo is the current speaker – Gerindra, the National Mandate Party (PAN), the Democratic Party and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).

"Utut looks good on paper as recommended [to Megawati],

But we don't know the final decision yet. Megawati may have other considerations," Eva told *The Jakarta Post*.

Utut is a known chess Grandmaster, having won various tournaments. Dubbed Indonesia's chess icon, he changed course after joining the PDI-P in 2009 and was elected to the House the same year. This is his second stint as a lawmaker after being re-elected in the 2014 legislative elections representing the Central Java VII electoral district comprising Purbalangga, Banjarnegara and Kebumen regencies.

He took the helm as PDI-P faction chairman in 2015, replacing lawmaker Olly Dondokambey who ran in the gubernatorial elections. In 2016, Utut was mandat-

ed as deputy chairman of House Commission X, which oversees education, youth, sports, tourism, arts and culture.

Eva said seniority and experience in leading the House's completion apparatus council became the major points of consideration in choosing a figure, as that person must know how to handle the faction.

Another person that Megawati might eye, she added, was faction secretary Bambang Wuryanto.

The PDI-P, as the leader of the pro-government party, wants the MD3 Law to be amended because it was denied a leadership post despite claiming victory in the 2014 legislative elections. Then, opposition parties passed an amendment to the law awarding House

speakerships to the largest coalition of parties, rather than the individual parties garnering the most votes.

The House wanted to inaugurate a new deputy speaker last week but postponed it because the newly passed law has yet to be validated by the government. The House is now in recess before resuming its duties in early March.

The additional slots on the DPR and MPR speakership boards are the result of intense political lobbying amid nearly two-year deliberations.

Eva said the presence of the PDI-P in the House speakership would balance the power between ruling and opposition parties.

"Now in the ruling coalition,

there are the PDI-P, PAN and Golkar, while the opposition has Gerindra, the PKS and Dems. That will be fair and more balanced. This will be more beneficial for the government," Eva added.

The parties also prepared names to fill the MPR deputy speakers' posts. The PDI-P touted senior lawmaker Ahmad Basarah, Gerindra proposed secretary-general and faction chairman Ahmad Muzani and the PKB has named chairman Muhaimin Iskandar for the positions.

MPR Speaker Zulkifli Hasan has confirmed the names but he has yet to ensure when to inaugurate the new deputy speakers.

"Maybe we'll inaugurate them right after the House inaugurates the new deputy speaker," he said.