



## Other news & views

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# 'Fill vacant senate seats with non-politicians'

*BERITA Harian* reported that analysts have urged Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to fill the 16 vacant Dewan Negara seats with non-politicians.

They suggested that seasoned professionals and technocrats fill the vacancies.

A Parliament spokesman told the daily that currently, only 54 out of 70 senate posts had been filled.

He said 29 were federal appointments made by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong while 25 were filled based on state legislative assembly quotas.

Of the 16 vacancies, 15 are federal appointments with the other to be filled by the Melaka legislative assembly.

Appointments to the Dewan Negara have two categories, with 26

posts chosen by the 13 state assemblies with each state allocated two seats, while the remaining 44 members are appointed by the King.

Universiti Putra Malaysia political analyst Assoc Prof Dr Mohd Izani Mohd Zain suggested the Prime Minister appoint technocrats, academics, public advocates, public icons, artistes and successful entrepreneurs to fill the vacancies.

"Appointing professionals will add value and quality to the debates at the Dewan Negara as they can utilise their expertise and experience.

"In terms of composition, maybe the Prime Minister can also consider appointing 30% from among professionals as senators to fill Cabinet positions," he said.

UKM Institute of Ethnic Studies director Prof Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin said it was important to appoint professionals to tackle economic and national unity issues.

"These two aspects cannot be separated in Malaysia," he said.

University Teknologi Malaysia law and constitution research fellow Dr Muhammad Fathi Yusof said appointing professionals and technocrats into the Cabinet would boost the government's image.

"Looking at the political upheaval over the past week, Malaysians have a negative perception of politicians.

"If the government is truly serious in restoring the people's confidence, then it should open up gov-

ernment administrative posts to professionals and technocrats too," he said.

The report stated that appointments of professionals as ministers was not something new, citing former USM vice-chancellor Tan Sri Musa Mohamad's tenure as education minister from 1999 to 2004.

Former Maybank president and chief executive officer Tan Sri Amirsham Abdul Aziz was also a minister in the Prime Minister's Department from March 2008 to April 2009.

The report stated that corporate icon Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar was a minister in the Prime Minister's Department tasked with overseeing the Economic Planning Unit from May 2013 to June 2016.