

Veteran MP Charles Chong appointed Acting Speaker of Parliament

Tan Weizhen

Today, 13 December 2012

A new Speaker of Parliament will be nominated by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the next parliamentary sitting in January. In the interim, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Charles Chong will be the Acting Speaker.

Speaking to TODAY, Mr Chong said he has not been told how long he is expected to hold the reins for.

"I think it would be understood that a Deputy Speaker would act until a new Speaker is elected by Parliament in due course," he added.

Singapore Management University law lecturer Eugene Tan, who is also a Nominated Member of Parliament, said there is a good chance that the new Speaker will be one of the two current Deputy Speakers - Mr Chong, MP for Joo Chiat, or Marine Parade GRC MP Seah Kian Peng. Former Cabinet Ministers such as Mr Mah Bow Tan and Mr Wong Kan Seng could also be possible candidates, he added.

"There will be a very active legislative agenda in the coming months, and they might want someone who can hit the ground running," he noted.

Dr Gillian Koh, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, shared the expected qualities of a Speaker, based on past practice: "He or she should be very process-oriented and even-tempered; someone who takes pride in ensuring that the rules are fairly applied to all. This will be especially important now that the House is more diverse than it has ever been," she added.