

Go-ahead for TPPA deal

127 in Dewan Rakyat support pact after two-day debate

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Dewan Rakyat approved yesterday the motion for Malaysia to participate in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement after a two-day debate that saw some heated exchanges on the second day.

The motion was approved after bloc voting, with 127 supporting it and 84 against.

The Government will table the motion in the Senate today for approval before the TPPA signing ceremony in New Zealand on Feb 4.

The trade deal involves 12 countries – Australia, Brunei, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Japan, the United States, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam – creating the biggest free trade area in the world.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, his deputy Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai were in the House to vote for the motion tabled by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

A tired-looking but elated Mustapa said that TPPA was his biggest challenge as a minister.

“But with the support of Cabinet ministers, Miti staff and 17 agencies, it was a collective effort.

“Under the leadership of (chief negotiator) Datuk J. Jayasiri and his team of various races and from a few ministries, they were able to

defend the country's interest and sovereignty,” Mustapa said.

He also promised that the ministry would continue to engage the various parties, including the Opposition, in the parliamentary bi-partisan caucus and NGOs in the ratification process.

After the signing ceremony on Feb 4, the domestic ratification process will start with 26 amendments to 17 laws to be tabled in Parliament.

The ratification process must be done within 24 months before the trade deal is enforced.

Asked when would the first amendment be tabled in Parliament, Mustapa said it should not be done in a hurry.

“We need to carefully do it and not rush it through. We will take into account the MPs' opinions.

“Maybe the first amendments will be tabled in Parliament next year but that is my assumption,”

he said.

The voting in the Dewan caused a slight uproar yesterday when Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia allowed a motion by PAS' Sepang MP Mohamed Hanipa Maidin to drop the word ratification from the original motion tabled on Tuesday.

But it was quickly debated and when a vote was taken on the motion, it was rejected by the House.



We're good to go: Najib sharing a light moment with Mustapa (right) after the TPPA motion was passed in parliament together with Zahid.