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Daim: Wanita Umno probe under way

Saiful Azhar Abdullah

SUNGAI PETANI, Mon. - Umno treasurer Tun Daim Zainuddin said the special committee formed to investigate Wanita Umno's accounts was interviewing witnesses, adding that the probe would be completed as soon as possible.

The committee, which he heads, has already scrutinised the movement's accounts.

Speaking to reporters after a briefing on the development of the Merbok constituency by Kuala Muda district officer Farouk Ibrahim, Daim said so far the committee had obtained explanations from the movement's former secretary and treasurer.

Daim declined to reveal the initial findings of the investigation. Asked when the investigation would be completed, he said: "It is difficult to say but we will try to complete it as soon as possible."

Asked whether the committee had detected any wrongdoing, Daim said: "It is also difficult to say... just wait until the investigation is completed."

Daim said several other Wanita Umno officials would be called by the committee to give their explanations. He declined to reveal names.

Asked whether he would be calling Wanita chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and her predecessor Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz to explain, Daim said the committee had not decided on this.

"We will call them if necessary," he said, adding that all parties would be given equal opportunity to explain.

"I am a lawyer... I have been a prosecutor and a judge... I will give them the chance (to explain)... We have to be fair and that's why I do not want to comment (much)," he added.

Asked whether the Supreme Council had given the committee a time-frame to complete the investigation, Daim said: "If possible, I want to complete it as soon as possible."

The investigation into the Wanita Umno's accounts was ordered by the Supreme Council last month following complaints by members.

The accounts which were under scrutiny were those maintained by the previous office bearers.

Daim is required to submit a report on the accounts to the Supreme Council.

Apart from Daim, other members of the committee are accountant Syed Amin Al-Jefri and a lawyer.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, speaking to reporters after chairing the Supreme Council meeting last month, said the investigation into the Wanita Umno's accounts would be carried out thoroughly.

He had said that all parties would be given a fair chance to defend themselves.

Asked to comment on the increase in electricity tariff beginning this month which manufacturers said would affect their competitiveness and would raise production cost, Daim, who is also Economic Adviser to the Government, said the manufacturers should increase their productivity in order to remain competitive.

"If everything goes up, we have to keep increasing our productivity. Only then can we become very competitive. You like it or not, when salaries are increased, everything will be increased... therefore, we must increase our productivity," he said.

Asked about his meeting with Merbok Barisan Nasional leaders, Daim, who is Merbok MP, said the leaders had requested for more infrastructure facilities.

Infrastructure facilities in the constituency have been improved tremendously but they want more and we will give them," he said, adding that he had raised the matter with Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid.

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