

Select committee not meeting any time soon
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The bipartisan select committee on electoral reforms will not be meeting for the first time tomorrow, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz clarified today.

This clears the confusion that arose following Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's announcement of the committee yesterday.

"There is a cabinet meeting tomorrow, (but) not the select committee (meeting).

"I brought the memorandum that the MPs had given and we agreed to form the committee," Nazri (left) said when contacted.

He was referring to the memorandum seeking an emergency parliamentary sitting that opposition MPs submitted on Aug 8.

This followed claims that at least 1,100 permanent residents had been added to the electoral roll meant for citizens.

Asked on the possibility of a special sitting before October, Nazri's said that would "certainly not" occur as it was "not necessary".

He also said there is no question of an emergency sitting any more since the government had decided on forming the committee to address the issue.

"Hopefully, next session", said the minister when asked when the committee might be formed.

Bernama quoted Najib as saying yesterday that the bipartisan committee would have its first meeting tomorrow.

However, other mainstream newspapers and news portals that also reported Najib's speech at a buka puasa event at the national news agency's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur did not substantiate the Bernama report.

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said he was shocked by the report that the select committee would have its first meeting tomorrow, since only Parliament had the power to form such a committee.

"I contacted (PAS president Abdul) Hadi (Awang) and (DAP adviser Lim) Kit (Siang), and none of us know about this. A select committee must be formed in Parliament and the opposition must be fully consulted.

"I'm the leader of the opposition and I was not informed of anything... is the government going to put its people on the committee and simply turn it into a rubber stamp?" Anwar asked.

Parliamentary motion needed to set up panel

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang also expressed shock over the report that the select committee would have its first meeting tomorrow to discuss "everything that needs to be done" and reach a consensus on the matter.

"How can this be when the parliamentary select committee has not yet been formed and the respective Pakatan Rakyat parties have not been consulted and their agreement sought with regard to the PSC's terms of reference and its membership?" he said in a statement.

Nazri, who was also unaware of what had exactly transpired, simply said, "maybe they (Bernama) got it from the prime minister's announcement".

Asked about the opposition's request for an emergency sitting, Nazri, who is in charge of legal affairs, said that there was "no urgency" for it.

"There is no question of an emergency sitting any more since we have decided on forming the committee to address the issue," he said.

This would be dealt with at the next Parliament sitting scheduled to begin on Oct 3, said Nazri. The Budget 2012 will also be tabled at this sitting.

When contacted, Dewan Rakyat deputy speaker Wan Junaidi Jaafar explained that the formation of a parliamentary select committee has to go through the legislature.

"It has to be proposed by way of a motion and tabled," Wan Junaidi said.

Additional reporting by Kuek Ser Kuang Keng.

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