

**Energy Commission must speak up on coal plant**  
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MP SPEAKS The Energy Commission must confirm if *The Edge Financial Daily* report that 1MDB is being given the unfair advantage of changing the terms of its bid for the 2,000MW coal-fired power plant is just more “baseless speculation”.

When I criticised the Energy Commission in the statements I made last month on the award of the new 2,000MW coal-fired power plant, “Project 3B”, to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry openly condemned my comments as “baseless and mere speculation”.

I accused the government then of intending to make the award to 1MDB despite it not submitting the lowest bid for the tender to supply electricity to Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), based on earlier reports by *The Edge Financial Daily*.

However on Feb 28, the ministry confirmed my “baseless speculation” that 1MDB is indeed awarded the new independent power producer (IPP) power plant concession.

The latest news on the same newspaper, on its Wednesday, March 5 edition, front-paged a new story that 1MDB is changing the terms of its original bid for Project 3B by moving the location of the power plant from Jimah, Negeri Sembilan, to a new site in Pulau Indah, Selangor.

The alleged 310-acre site in Pulau Indah was only acquired by 1MDB on Feb 21 for RM317 million.

I had earlier criticised the land acquisition by 1MDB because it was priced at RM23.50 per square feet (psf), 137 percent higher than the last valuation conducted in August 2011, which was RM9.93psf.

More suspiciously, the land was acquired from Tadmax Resources Bhd, formerly known as Wijaya Baru Global Bhd. This is the same group which sold the adjacent piece of land in Pulau Indah to Port Klang Authority (PKA) and undertook the scandalous RM12.5 billion Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) project.

Now, with the latest expose that 1MDB has purchased the land at the last minute, exactly a week before the official award of the RM11 billion Project 3B was made, will the ministry once again claim that the report by *The Edge Financial Daily* is “baseless and mere speculation”?

Or will it once again be proven correct that 1MDB has been allowed to make major amendments to its bid for Project 3B, in direct contravention of the terms and conditions of the open tender conducted last year?

Suspicious of collusion by Energy Commission

The timing of the hurried land acquisition at such a high price by 1MDB, and the subsequent award of Project 3B to the company, raises public suspicions that the regulator, the Energy Commission, is colluding and acting in connivance with 1MDB.

The question hence arises: were the goalposts shifted, both during and after the evaluation by

the ministry in order to justify and ensure that the 1MDB, which is facing financial difficulties, will win the concession?

The government cannot blame the rakyat for thinking that this is a clear-cut desperate attempt to prop up 1MDB, which is labouring under a mountain of debt that is estimated in excess of RM30 billion.

It has become a clear case that the Energy Commission is failing to protect the interest of the rakyat, and has placed the interest of 1MDB ahead of its constituted responsibilities.

As a result, not only will the man-on-the street suffer higher electricity costs, both the foreign and local business communities will lose faith and confidence in the Najib Abdul Razak administration in carrying out independent and fair tender evaluation exercises, because they are just a sham to legitimise the award of contracts to the BN cronies and other vested interests.

I hope that the report by *The Edge* is indeed "baseless speculation". However, if not, the Energy Commission chairperson and its chief executive must resign for failing to carry out their fiduciary duties and acting in concert with an energy supplier to subvert a fair and transparent open tender exercise.

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