

## **'Headless' PAC vows to pursue 1MDB probe**

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**By Koh Jun Lin**

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will proceed with its investigation into 1MDB, its deputy chairperson Tan Seng Giaw said today.

As such, witnesses who have been summoned to testify are being notified to attend the hearings on the appointed dates that have already agreed upon by both the committee and the witnesses, another PAC member, William Leong, added.

"Otherwise we shall have to exercise powers conferred under the Houses of Parliament (Privileges and Powers) Act 1952 against those who have received the summons and do not turn up," Leong said.

This includes current and former 1MDB chief executives Shahrul Ibrahim Halmi, Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman, and Arul Kanda Kandasamy, who have been called to testify on Aug 4, Aug 5, and Aug 6 respectively.

As for the tycoon Low Taek Jho, Tan said Low is still in the process of being summoned.

### **Quorum easily met**

This move runs contrary to the statement by former PAC chairperson Nur Jazlan Mohamed, who announced yesterday that the 1MDB investigation of the PAC would be put on hold until the next parliamentary sitting in October.

"This is an unfortunate statement (by Nur Jazlan, left in photo). Although four members have been appointed as deputy ministers (one a full minister), there are still (nine) PAC members who can carry out the work of PAC," Tan (on right in photo) told a press conference at the Opposition Leader's office in the Parliament building today.

He made reference to the Dewan Rakyat Standing Order 83(3), which states that the quorum of parliamentary committees shall be three persons including the chairperson, unless ordered otherwise by the parliament.

Under the standing orders, meetings can proceed in the chairperson's absence as the deputy chairperson can serve as acting chairperson.

In addition, Standing Order 77(3) states that if the chairperson or vice chairperson is absent from the committee for any reason, the committee may appoint another PAC member as chairperson.

## **Shirk PAC at own risk**

Meanwhile, under Section 9 of the Houses of Parliament (Privileges and Powers) Act 1952, a person disobeying an order from the parliament or its committees for attendance may be summarily punished with a fine up to RM1,000.

During yesterday's cabinet reshuffle, Nur Jazlan and three other PAC members from BN were appointed as ministers and deputy ministers.

They would have to relinquish their PAC posts, as the Standing Order 77(4) prohibits its members to hold ministerial positions. This leaves the PAC with four BN members and five opposition members.

"All proceedings that had been arranged for August, including 1MDB will be halted until the new PAC line-up is announced at the next Dewan Rakyat sitting," he was quoted as saying in The Malaysian Insider.

However, Leong stressed that the PAC is a standing committee of the parliament.

"It has been appointed by the parliament, and it does not dissolve until the parliament dissolves," he said.

Another PAC member, the Tumpat MP Kamaruddin Jaafar, added that the PAC has many other investigations to conduct apart from 1MDB, and thus the committee cannot simply stop its work.

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