

PAC hearing going ahead although Pandikar says 'no'

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Opposition members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will be going ahead with the inquiry into 1MDB next week, which is against Parliament Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia's decree.

Its vice-chairperson Dr Tan Seng Giaw said this is especially since there is no official letter informing them of the PAC's suspension.

"No official letters have been sent to us so we will be at the August 4 meeting," he said in a press conference at the DAP's headquarters today.

The PAC had scheduled hearings for the witnesses in the 1MDB inquiry from August 4 to August 6 as well as August 17 and August 18.

Tan's stance, as well as the four other opposition PAC members who were present today, is against Pandikar's (photo) who had said that the PAC could not go ahead with its meeting until a new chairperson is elected.

Pandikar had said that although Meeting Order 77(3) allows a PAC member to be nominated to chair the committee meeting, it is only if the chairperson or his deputy are unable to attend.

The order, cited Pandikar, could not be used if the chairperson himself has to vacate his chair.

Responding to this, PAC member Tony Pua said Pandikar's interpretation of the clause was an 'absolute abuse of the standing orders and of the English and Malay language'.

'Complete mockery'

Commenting on Pandikar's statement in May that he had wanted to resign as Parliament speaker as he was considered simply as a rubber stamp, Pua pointed out his latest reasoning on the PAC would only strengthen the perception that he indeed works under the executive body.

"This will strengthen the perception that he is under orders by the prime minister to stifle the PAC from its investigation on 1MDB.

"His interpretation [of clause 77(3)] makes a complete mockery of the parliamentary institution and it makes a complete mockery of the speaker's office, in that the PAC cannot function when one of its members become appointed as a minister.

"We look completely like a rubber stamp at this point in time. So we hope that the speaker

will review his position that the PAC cannot function without its chairperson," he said.

Asked whether Pandikar had the power to announce the suspension of the PAC, Pua (photo) said even if he had wanted to do so, members of the PAC should be given official letters.

"Whether he has the power to do so is another issue. But there must be at least an official letter to announce the suspension of the PAC.

The imbroglio in relation to the PAC occurred when former PAC chairperson Nur Jazlan Mohamed and three other former BN PAC members were appointed to government positions by prime minister and 1MDB board of adviser chief Najib Abdul Razak on Tuesday.

The other three were Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Mas Ermieyati Samsudin and Wilfred Maidus Tangau who all will assume deputy minister posts.

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