

Zahid proposes compulsory oath of secrecy for PAC members

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UPDATED 5.2PM | Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has proposed that members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) take a compulsory oath of secrecy, presumably to prevent leaks on the hearing into the 1MDB scandal.

"I have proposed that all PAC members to compulsorily take the oath to safeguard the secrecy of all," Zahid told a press conference at Parliament today.

"The president of the parliamentary select committee (Pandikar Amin Mulia) has approved for the proposal to be referred to the legal adviser to decide if it can be implemented," he said.

It is believed that the action is being taken to ensure that no information on the PAC hearing into the 1MDB scandal will be leaked in the future.

PAC, which began its hearing on 1MDB on May 19, was caught up in a controversy when it was alleged that information on the matter was leaked to local and international media.

PAC member Tony Pua had denied leaking the report in the wake of the disclosure.

On Sept 9, US-based Wall Street Journal had published a report which claimed that US\$1.4 billion paid by 1MDB to Abu Dhabi-based International Petroleum Company (IPIC) had gone missing.

'Ask Wan Azizah'

The report was based on the transcript of the PAC hearing into the 1MDB scandal.

Former PAC chief Nur Jazlan Mohamed had claimed that PAC members did not have the transcript of the PAC hearing.

Zahid also said the new PAC members would be announced in the current sitting of Parliament soon.

The new members were picked by the parliamentary select committee which held a meeting earlier today, according to Zahid.

PAC was forced to postpone its hearing for three months after Nur Jazlan and three members were promoted into the cabinet.

Hasan Arifin (BN-Rompin) was appointed the new PAC chief on Monday.

Asked about the claim by Opposition Leader Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail that BN lawmakers will support her motion of no-confidence against Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, Zahid only gave a curt reply.

"Go and ask her," he said.

'Conspiracy unfolding'

Speculation is rife that former deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, former minister Shafie Apdal and three BN elected representatives will be supporting the motion.

"I have tactics to deal with it," said Zahid yesterday as reported by Sin Chew Daily.

Today, the minister said he had spoken earlier of a conspiracy being hatched against the prime minister.

"I said before (about this conspiracy) because I had obtained information from the agencies under me. However, many disputed my statement.

"(I am) not plucking (this information) from the air; some (even) said I was day-dreaming. But it (conspiracy) is unfolding now," he said.

"It is up to them," he said, responding to a question that such a motion would not succeed as the opposition had failed to save Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Gelang Patah) from being suspended for six months.

Meanwhile, news portals Malaysiakini and The Malaysian Insider as well as business newspaper The Edge Financial Daily were banned from the press conference.

An aide confirmed with Malaysiakini that the directive came from Zahid himself.