

## **Selangor assembly appoints Umno man as PAC chief**

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Barisan Nasional has been caught in an awkward position after the Selangor state government appointed one of its state assemblyperson as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairperson.

The motion which was passed at the Selangor legislative assembly today was initially opposed by the BN bench, but eventually accepted by Opposition Leader Dr Mohd Khir Toyo, albeit imposing a three-month trial period as a condition.

It is the norm in many developed democracies to appoint an opposition legislator to head similar bodies but the BN-controlled Parliament and state legislative bodies has thus far refused to do so.

NONEThe Selangor legislative assembly's decision to appoint Umno's Sungai Burong assemblyperson Mohd Shamsudin Lias (left) as the new PAC chief, who refused the position during the debates.

Shamsudin said while the appointment of an opposition member to chair the powerful committee was a positive move, he could not see why it is necessary.

He said the previous PAC chair, Kajang assemblyperson Lee Kim Sin, had performed well and questioned if it is common practice by Pakatan Rakyat to arbitrarily replace its officers.

"This appointment has other motives behind it, so I cannot accept," he told the House.

After much hue and cry during the debates, the opposition voted against the motion as expected.

Khair wants bigger slice of PAC pie

Earlier during the debate, Opposition Leader Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said the opposition bench can only accept Shamsudin's appointment if they are given four out of the seven seats on the PAC.

NONESpeaking in the House for the first time since returning from his one-year suspension, he said Shamsudin's appointment meant nothing if the opposition do not get more than two seats on the committee.

"This is the modern era. In the past if you are Badang (a mythical warrior) then your strength will give you victory, but now it is those with the numbers who win," he said.

In winding up the debate, state executive councillor Rodziah Ismail shot down Khir's demand, because the quota for the opposition seats on PAC was devised by BN themselves previously.

"Section 71(1) of the standing orders states clearly that appointments to any committee formed will go according to the ratio of representation in the House.

"If you say the PAC has failed in its duties while being chaired by a PR member, then why not take the opportunity to do better?," said Rodziah, who tabled the motion after question

time.

Speaker: Khir agreed last month

Speaking to reporters later, Speaker Teng Chang Khim reprimanded Khir for criticising the PAC appointment, adding that the opposition had ample opportunity to refuse the appointment.

NONEHe said he had personally discussed Shamsudin's appointment with Khir three weeks before the assembly sitting.

"He agreed and based on that, the government and exco agreed to appoint Shamsudin. If they had any objections, they should have said so earlier.

"This is a last minute change to politicise the issue," he said at a press conference.

At a separate press conference, Khir said he had sought a bigger opposition representation in PAC in order to ensure Shamsudin could perform his duties effectively.

"This has a political agenda. When Shamsudin cannot perform, they will say he did not perform when he can't do his job due to being blocked by PAC members.

"We want to make changes and it is rare for the opposition to be appointed as PAC chief, so why not give more seats (on the PAC) to the opposition?," he asked.

Khir however conceded that if the arrangement does indeed work, Shamsudin would have no choice but to carry on as the appointment has already been passed by the state assembly.

Historic move

In tabling the motion, Rodziah told the house that Shamsudin's appointment was proof of the state government's commitment in upholding the principles of competency, accountability and transparency.

pkjohor crime 210607 rodziah ismail"This is a historic moment where the state government is willing to pave the way for check and balance," she told the House.

Rodziah said Shamsudin's appointment, if passed by the House, will promote a healthy political culture in the administration.

Shamsudin's experience in conducting audits and serving as a district officer makes him an ideal candidate to head PAC, she added.

"This shows the Selangor government's openness in facing many issues such as (illegal) sand mining. Nothing is closed, it is all out in the open."

This is the second major precedent set by the Pakatan Rakyat-ruled Selangor administration in as many days, following the tabling of the Freedom of Information Bill yesterday.

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