

Pua threatens to sue Najib, Nazri for Tajuddin Ramli bailout
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 — DAP MP Tony Pua threatened legal action against Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz today, saying they would be sued for negligence if Putrajaya fails to recover the billions in debts owed by Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli.

The Petaling Jaya Utara MP predicted the directive ordering all government-linked companies (GLC) to withdraw their suits against the former Malaysia Airlines (MAS) chairman would likely see him escaping scot-free.

"If the current Attorney-General is unwilling to consider the above action against the Prime Minister due to the complete lack of independence of the former's office, Najib can be assured that full, open and transparent investigations will be carried out by the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government against his misdeeds should we secure victory in the next General Election," Pua warned in a statement today.

"This is to ensure that those who have knowingly and negligently caused losses to the government's coffers will be held accountable and will not be let off unpunished," he added.

The DAP national publicity secretary demanded an assurance from both PM Najib and Nazri, a senior Cabinet minister, that Tajuddin would be made to settle a bulk of his debts to the GLCs and reminded them that it involved taxpayers monies.

He said if the GLCs heeded the directive and withdrew all civil suits against Tajuddin before a settlement is achieved, the companies would no longer have any avenue to claim any compensation or damages from the tycoon.

"This is because they would not be able continue with the existing suit against Tajuddin once they are withdrawn.

"At the same time, because the claims were for actions which occurred more than six years ago, the GLCs will not be able to initiate new legal actions against Tajuddin as it would be time-barred," Pua (picture) said.

An out-of-court settlement with the GLCs, he added, would grant Tajuddin little or no incentive to settle any of his debts once the suits are withdrawn.

"This is unless of course, the intended 'settlement' is not with the GLCs but a clandestine 'off-site' solution with Najib, as suggested by the latter," said Pua, mocking the prime minister's explanation on the matter.

Spotlight was cast on Tajuddin and the country's ailing flag carrier MAS after a letter penned by Nazri, a senior minister in Najib's Cabinet, was obtained by The Malaysian Insider, revealing a directive from the administration urging all GLCs to drop its suits against the fallen tycoon.

Tajuddin is presently facing billions in legal claims against him, following accusations by MAS in 2002 that he had caused the carrier to suffer losses in excess of RM8 billion.

After his letter surfaced, Nazri defended the administration's move, saying it would not spell a debt bailout for Tajuddin but was merely a suggestion to the GLCs to work out an out-of-court settlement with the former MAS chairman.

When responding to the matter on Friday, Najib appeared to play down the issue, describing the intervention as an "off-site" solution.

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