

Did Najib okay 1MDB duo's no-show at PAC hearing, asks DAP
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DAP today questioned the absence of 1Malaysia Development Berhad's (1MDB) top bosses and asked if the prime minister allowed them to skip the bipartisan committee hearing in Parliament.

Gelang Patah MP Lim Kit Siang said this was one of the chief questions that the Malaysian public has been asking since it was made known that both 1MDB group executive director and president Arul Kanda Kandasamy and board member Datuk Shahrol Halmi would not be attending the Public Accounts Committee hearing today.

This comes after PAC chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed said both had requested to postpone their attendance at the committee's hearing today.

"Did Najib as finance minister have knowledge that the duo would play truant from the PAC hearing scheduled today and did he give the green light for the duo to play truant from the PAC hearing today?" the DAP veteran leader asked Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"Have Arul and Sharom good reasons for playing truant from the scheduled PAC hearing on the 1MDB scandal today, when the duo had been given more than two weeks' notice of the hearing?"

Shahrol was 1MDB's first CEO from February 2009 to March 2013, while Arul Kanda was appointed in January this year.

Both are key witnesses in the PAC's inquiry into the Finance Ministry-owned 1MDB, which has incurred RM42 billion in debts in just six years of operation.

Lim also asked why PAC was not informed about Shahrol and Arul Kanda's "important overseas appointments" when notice of the hearing was handed to them two weeks ago.

"PAC was only informed via a letter from the Finance Ministry on May 22 that the duo could not attend," he added.

The DAP parliamentary leader said that with all the scrutiny and public backlash over the state investment vehicle's debts and controversial dealings, it would have been more important for the duo to attend the hearing to put to rest all doubts.

"One would have thought that Najib and the 1MDB board would have welcomed the PAC hearing today to put to rest all doubts and queries about the integrity, transparency and good corporate governance which had been haunting the strategic development company for the past five years.

"This should be the case as Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has stood

his ground that the 1MDB scandal is the 'last straw to break the camel's back' and would cause the downfall of Umno Barisan Nasional."

On top of severe criticism from former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who had called Najib a "liar" in his latest blog posting, 1MDB should, in fact, be urging PAC to hold an earlier hearing to debunk all allegations against it.

"Did Najib or the relevant finance ministry authority ask the duo to reschedule their overseas appointment as their appearance before the PAC is more important so as to put to rest all doubts and queries about the 1MDB scandal as the biggest financial scandal in the country, and if not, why?" Lim asked.

Yesterday, PKR secretary-general Rafizi Ramli said both Shahrol and Arul Kanda should be sacked for skipping the PAC hearing, saying that their actions showed a severe lack of accountability.

A staunch critic of the government's investment arm, Rafizi said the duo's no-show could be due to directives from Najib, who wanted to prevent more worms from spilling out of the can.

PAC began its own hearings on the matter last Tuesday, after deciding not to wait for an independent probe by the auditor-general to be completed. – May 26, 2015.

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