

Najib's brother says 1MDB no-show 'unacceptable'
The Malaysian Insider
May 26, 2015

The prime minister's brother Datuk Seri Nazir Razak has described 1Malaysia Development Berhad's (1MDB) failure to testify at the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing scheduled for today as "unacceptable".

"Your company has triggered a national crisis and you can be too busy to face Parliament? Unacceptable," Nazir (pic, right) said in a posting on Instagram.

He was referring to 1MDB group executive director and CEO Arul Kanda and former chief executive officer Shahrol Halimi's abrupt request for a 30-day extension before testifying to the PAC, citing important overseas appointments.

The duo only made the request four days before the hearing despite receiving two-weeks' notice from the PAC.

The CIMB chairman has been vocal in his criticism against 1MDB, a Finance Ministry-owned state investment vehicle, established in 2009, which has chalked up debts of up to RM42 billion.

He had previously said the 1MDB board should resign if they did not want to take active measures to address concerns over its finances.

Nazir was reported to have said that it was irresponsible for the debt-ridden state investment arm to do nothing and simply wait for the auditor-general (A-G) to complete his investigation.

"The immediate check for a responsible board is to appoint an independent (auditor) now... otherwise the board and management, in my view, should resign," Nazir was quoted as saying by The Star earlier this month.

"It is your basic responsibility. There is a complete mistrust in your financial situation. You have to responsibly deal with that. But instead you sit there and wait for the A-G.

"To me that is irresponsible. If you do that then it is better for you to step down and let someone else come in and take over."

PAC chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed said yesterday Shahrol and Arul Kanda had requested to postpone their attendance at the committee's hearing to a later date.

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 1MDB fiasco.

PAC had begun its own hearings on the matter last Tuesday, after deciding not to wait

for an independent probe by the A-G to be completed.

1MDB yesterday denied that Arul Kanda and Shahrol were skipping the meeting with PAC, but instead were "looking forward" to telling their side of the story.

Despite that, the 1MDB top guns have come under fire for not attending today's hearing, with PKR's Rafizi Ramli saying they should be sacked as 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 a directive from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also chairperson of the 1MDB board of advisers, who wanted to prevent more worms from spilling out of the can.

DAP's Lim Kit Siang also criticised the two, noting that with all the scrutiny and public backlash over the state investment vehicle's troubles, it would have been more important for the duo to attend the hearing to put to rest all doubts.

Gerakan Youth chief Tan Keng Liang was more scathing in his comments, warning Arul Kanda and Shahrol not to "test the patience of Malaysians".

"Gerakan Youth expresses our utter disappointment over the failure of both the top officials of 1MDB to attend the PAC hearing today. The request of 30 days extension is absurd.

"With due respect to both the top officials, 1MDB is currently subject of public concern. As the current and former top official of 1MDB, both of them should place priority in attending the PAC hearing today," he said in a statement.

He said that the fund had been given many opportunities to explain itself but had taken those chances for granted. – May 26, 2015.

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