

**PAC cannot continue 1MDB probe till new chair named, says Dewan Rakyat Speaker**  
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Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) cannot continue with its ongoing probe into 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) until a new chairman is elected, said Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia.

BNBBC.my website reported that although Standing Orders 77(3) allows an existing member to be elected to chair the meeting in the absence of the chairman or his deputy due to ill health or inability to attend meetings due to specific reasons, it cannot be used when there is a vacancy.

"Additionally, to avoid any dispute or any issues that arise over the validity of the PAC proceedings when the chairman post is vacant in the future, it is only fair if PAC is convened after the appointment of the new chairman," he was quoted as saying by the website today.

Four PAC members were appointed as ministers and deputy ministers in a Cabinet reshuffle on Tuesday, raising questions as to its ongoing proceedings, including inquiry into 1MDB, which is to continue next week.

Chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed has been appointed the deputy home minister, while Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican is now deputy foreign minister and Datuk Mas Ermieyati Samsudin is deputy tourism and culture minister.

Another member Datuk Wilfred Madius Tangau is the new science, technology and innovation minister.

All four were sworn in yesterday morning before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Nur Jazlan had said on Tuesday that all PAC proceedings, including its inquiry into 1MDB is temporarily halted pending the appointment of new members to replace four of them but this was disputed by his deputy, DAP's Kepong MP Dr Tan Seng Giaw who insisted that the ongoing proceedings can go on as scheduled.

However, Deputy Dewan Rakyat Speaker Datuk Ronald Kiandee had said PAC cannot continue with its probe until it consults Pandikar on its next move, as the composition of the bipartisan committee now no longer reflects the Parliament's make-up, which is necessary under the existing Standing Order.

1MDB current and former top executives are set to be present at the PAC inquiry from August 4.

The state investment firm's former CEO Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi will be the first to face the bipartisan committee, while president and group executive director Arul Kanda Kandasamy is set to be grilled the next day.

Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman, who served as 1MDB's CEO from March 2013 to January 2015 will appear before the panel on August 6.

Criticism has been mounting over the Finance Ministry wholly owned investment vehicle, established in 2009.

Scrutiny has grown more intense following whistleblower site Sarawak Report's recent exposes, which piled pressure on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and prompted opposition politicians, former and current Umno leaders including long serving former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and anti-graft bodies to demand a thorough investigation into the fund.

The Auditor-General had submitted a preliminary report to PAC on July 10, with a full report due by the end of the year.

A special task force is also probing into the company's operations.

The strategic fund has come under the public scrutiny mainly because of the whopping RM42 billion debt that it has racked up in the past five years.

1MDB has not been able to generate enough earnings to service its debts.

This raises public concerns over some of its debt papers issued with the government's letter of support – meaning the government is responsible for the fund's debt repayment should it default.

Consequently, the investment fund is currently stepping up efforts to hive off its assets, namely power generation plants and land, to ease its extremely tight cash flow. – July 30, 2015.

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