

Cabinet to decide on issue of PAC chairman today, says report
The Malaysian Insider
August 12, 2015

The fate of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) probe into troubled 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) which was halted due to last month's Cabinet reshuffle will be decided today, The Star reported.

The English daily today quoted Minister Datuk Seri Azalina Othman saying that the Cabinet was expected to decide today whether it wants a special parliamentary sitting to appoint a new PAC chairman.

Azalina, who is minister in charge of parliamentary affairs, told The Star that the Cabinet is expected to either call for a special sitting or wait until the Dewan Rakyat convenes again on October 19.

There have been calls from Umno leaders for the Cabinet to quickly appoint a new PAC chairman instead of waiting until the next parliamentary meeting.

This so that PAC can continue its probe into debt-ridden state investor 1MDB, which was halted after its chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed was promoted to deputy minister late last month.

"The Cabinet will decide if the appointments will be done at a special sitting or when Parliament convenes as usual," Azalina was quoted as saying.

Some top 1MDB officials were called up for hearings in the highly anticipated PAC probe this month. Businessman Low Taek Jho or Jho Low was also scheduled to appear before PAC in early September.

Those hearings did not take place as PAC's operations were suspended after Nur Jazlan was promoted in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's Cabinet reshuffle on July 28.

Putrajaya's critics have asked whether Nur Jazlan's promotion was done to cripple PAC's probe into 1MDB as he was vocal on the need to investigate the company, of which Najib is advisory board chairman.

Finance Ministry-owned 1MDB has been in the news for its questionable business deals which saw it racking up debts of RM42 billion after six years of operation.

Besides Nur Jazlan, three other PAC members, all of them BN lawmakers, were promoted and given Cabinet posts. They are Datuk Wilfred Madius Tangau, Datuk Mas Ermieyati Samsudin and Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican.

The Star also reported Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee as saying that the nominee for the new PAC chairman comes from the Cabinet while its members are chosen by a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC).

The Cabinet will also decide whether it wants a special sitting to appoint the new PAC chairman, Kiandee said in the report.

The PSC is composed of six members and chaired by Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia. The others are Datuk Joseph Entulu Belaun, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, Lim Kit Siang and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar however was disqualified following his sodomy conviction in February.

The Star also said the deputy prime minister was a PSC member by convention. – August 12, 2015.

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