

# PAC to quiz reps of several ministries, agencies

**ISSUES:** Discrepancies in the way finances were managed

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**T**HE Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will be summoning several ministries and government agencies to probe further issues highlighted in the second series of the Auditor General's Report.

PAC chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed said it would call up the Agriculture and Agrobased Industry Ministry to investigate the Replicating Integrating Zone for Aquaculture Model (Izaq) project.

"The Izaq project was carried out under the National Key Economic Area and the probe will focus on the RM268.222 million contract given by the then secretary-general."

"The contract documents must be signed by the minister and not the secretary-general, especially if it is more than RM100 million," he told reporters.

Parliament house yesterday.

The report revealed that while Izaq was launched in 2011, with a 20 deadline to fulfil all its objectives, only 15.8 per cent was complete as of December last year.

The project is expected to cost RM2.142 billion. Ten anchor companies — involving 11 projects such as shrimp farms, fish farms and hatchery centres — signed 11 contracts with the Federal Government from 2011 to 2014.



Public Accounts Committee chairman **Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed** (right) with a copy of the Auditor General's Report 2014. With him are PAC deputy chairman **Dr Tan Seng Giam** and committee member **Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican** (left). Bernama pic



The deal was expected to generate Gross National Income amounting to RM1.383 billion and create 11,900 jobs.

The report said the secretary-general only had authority

to sign contracts worth up to RM100 million, in accordance with Section 2 of the Government Contracts Act 1949.

The secretary-general from Nov 11, 2010 to Aug 31, 2014 was Datuk Seri Mohd Hashim Abdullah, who was replaced by Datuk Arif Abdul Rahman.

The committee would also be calling up the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority on their management of the shrimp aqua-

culture programme.

Nur Jazlan said the project cost was RM79 million and the committee would look into the five companies appointed through direct negotiations.

As for the Education Ministry, he said the committee would focus on the autonomy given to several public higher learning institutions as there were discrepancies in the way their finances were managed.

"The ministry wants to give them full autonomy, but if they are still weak in terms of financial management, the committee will have to carry out an inquiry," he said, adding that among the universities which would be called were Universiti Malaya, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

PAC would also look into Prime Minister's Department's maintenance of the shipping budget for the

Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). Nur Jazlan said MMEA boats were used to patrol the porous waters off Sabah and there was an issue of improper payment reported in the second series of the report.

"The maintenance budget stood at RM231 million. We need them to explain what went wrong and how their finances were managed."

He said the committee wanted to focus on the budget given to maintain government assets and equipment as they felt that the assets were not properly taken care of.

Nur Jazlan said the Hotel Seri Malaysia chain management would also be called up as there were issues of improper payment.

The chain is under the purview of the Finance Ministry.

"We are hoping to call them to attend the inquiry which would most likely be held in September."