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Revolving door at GLCs resumes with new government

BY KAMARUL AZHAR

As the new Perikatan Nasional government led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob gets to work, one of the earliest changes his administration has made has been to the top positions at the various government-linked companies (GLCs).

Influencing how GLCs are run has become an important strategy for those in power as it is one of the ways to ensure that their economic and social development policies are implemented. So, it comes as no surprise when new leaders are installed at GLCs whenever there is a change in administration.

One of the GLCs said to have a new chairman is Perbadanan PR1MA Malaysia. Datuk Seri Tajuddin Abdul Rahman, member of parliament for Pasir Salak who is with Umno, is said to be the candidate replacing Datuk Seri Dr Shahidan Kassim at the public housing agency tasked with developing affordable homes for middle-income Malaysians.

PR1MA has confirmed that Shahidan resigned from the position on Sept 9. However, it says it has not received any official information on his replacement.

"PR1MA would like to confirm that Shahidan Kassim is no longer the chairman of PR1MA as he resigned on Sept 9, 2021. We would like to stress that he was not removed from his position," says PR1MA in response to *The Edge's* query.

"As for the appointment of the new chairman, we would like to point out that we have yet to receive any official information. The appointment of the new chairman will be announced accordingly."

Also with Umno, Shahidan is member of parliament for Arau. He was made PR1MA chairman on Oct 23, 2020, by former prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin. As chairman of PR1MA, he was also chairman of the National Housing Council.

A source tells *The Edge* that the decision was made due to Shahidan being appointed minister of the federal territories by Ismail Sabri. It is a practice at some GLCs that a Cabinet member should not helm the organisation.

Last Wednesday, national news agency Bernama reported that Tajuddin had been appointed chairman of the Government Backbenchers Club, replacing Shahidan, who had been chairman of the previously called Perikatan Nasional Backbenchers Club since May 2020.

Tajuddin is no stranger to helming GLCs. He was non-executive chairman of Prasarana Malaysia Bhd between May 11, 2020, and May 26, 2021. During his tenure at Prasarana, he courted controversies when he reportedly clashed with the then CEO Muhammad Nizam Alias. Nizam was then suspended and terminated from his position for alleged misconduct and insubordination.

Tajuddin also made the news for his calous remarks at a May 25 press conference following the collision of the Light Rail Transit trains the night before. He was removed from the position on May 26 by the Ministry of Finance following a public outcry over his lack of empathy and remorse over the incident.

Then on May 27, Tajuddin was detained by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission on two charges of abuse of power. He was released on bail, and there has been no updates on the cases since.

Meanwhile, UDA Holdings Bhd chairman Datuk Seri Jalaluddin Alias has been appointed as deputy minister of the federal territories. Jalaluddin, member of parliament for Jekebu, is also with Umno. He was appointed to the post at UDA — which oversees urban development projects re-

lated to business, industry and housing in Malaysia — in May 2020.

Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, Umno vice-president and member of parliament for Padang Terap, has been chairman of Tenaga Nasional Bhd since May 2020. Following his appointment as minister of rural development in August, he resigned from his position as chairman of Tenaga on Aug 29. It is not known who will be the national utility's new chairman.

Another GLC that may see changes at the top is Syarikat Perumahan Nasional Bhd. That is because the current chairman Haniza Mohamed Talha is an independent politician who was sacked from Parti Keadilan Rakyat in July 2020.

Haniza is a state assemblyman for Lembah Jaya in Selangor. As she is not a member of parliament, her support would not be needed by Ismail Sabri to maintain parliamentary majority.

Meanwhile, Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin, menteri besar of Johor from 2013 to 2018 and minister of higher education between 2008 and 2013, stepped down as chairman of Boustead Holdings Bhd in early August when Muhyiddin's government collapsed. A new chairman has not been appointed yet. ■