

Pandikar told to lasso runaway Najib on 1MDB
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Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia has been urged to rein in Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for dodging questions in Parliament over the controversial 1MDB.

DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang said Pandikar should decide on the matter if he was serious about parliamentary reform what with Najib citing parliamentary standing orders in refusing to answer questions about the debt-ridden company.

"Pandikar should intervene and rule whether the prime minister had abused the parliamentary standing orders to avoid answering pertinent questions about the RM42 billion 1MDB scandal – which will be the first step towards parliamentary reform in Malaysia," he said in a statement today.

Lim (photo) was referring to Najib's refusal to answer a query by DAP's Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua in a parliamentary written reply, citing Order 23(1)(i) of the Dewan Rakyat standing order.

Parliamentary Standing Orders 23(1)(i) states that "a question shall not be asked as to whether statements in the press or of private individuals or financial bodies are accurate".

Pua had asked if the 1MDB management had met with PetroSaudi International Limited for the first time on September 23, 2009 before inking a multi-billion ringgit deal with the company just five days later.

He also asked whether the deal had received the approval of the 1MDB board.

However, Najib, who is also finance minister, in the parliamentary written reply, said this was raised in an online portal which source cannot be verified and therefore refused to answer.

"This is a blatant abuse of the parliamentary process designed to ensure government accountability and good governance," said Lim.

He added that while online portal Sarawak Report had reported on the matter, Pua (photo) did not quote the whistleblower site.

"Why is the prime minister so shy or reluctant to answer this question – or is it because the facts asked were true, which the prime minister could not deny but does want to admit the truth, so as to continue to stonewall the principles of accountability and transparency?" questioned Lim.

'Confront Najib'

In a separate statement, Lim also urged ministers to confront Najib at the Cabinet meeting tomorrow over revelations that the prime minister's approval is needed for all financial deals by 1MDB, including controversial ones.

This follows the revelation that the memorandum and articles of association (M&A) of 1MDB's predecessor Terengganu Investment Authority (TIA) spelled out that the prime minister's consent is needed for all financial commitments.

"Do the cabinet ministers know that the prime minister is the final approving authority for all 1MDB's financial deals?

"If not, how can the cabinet ministers allow the prime minister to mislead them in such a colossal manner; and if yes, why have they given the prime minister such a "blank cheque" without any checks and balances as to plunge the country into a RM42 billion scandal," said Lim.

Najib, who is the chairperson of the 1MDB advisory board, had previously insisted that he merely plays an advisory role.

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