

Quit PAC to debate 1MDB boss, speaker tells Pua

MalaysiaKini.com

Nov 3rd, 2015

Zikri Kamarulzaman

Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia has ordered DAP lawmaker Tony Pua to either resign from the Public Accounts Committee or abstain from the committee's probe on 1MDB if he wants to debate the firm's boss Arul Kanda.

Pua had issued the challenge for a live television show on 1MDB, which the firm's president had accepted.

Arul had initially wanted Pua to relinquish his post in PAC but later retracted this condition.

Pandikar also ruled that Arul can no longer be a witness in the PAC probe if the debate goes on.

"This is to maintain PAC's transparency in line with House rules," the speaker said, referring to rules that bar testimonies and findings by the PAC from being made public before they are presented to the Dewan Rakyat.

Pandikar also said the debate could bring up premature matters that were still being probed, derail the investigations and make the public prejudiced against the PAC findings.

Opposition lawmakers rose to question Pandikar's ruling.

Takiyuddin Hassan (PAS-Kota Bharu) and Teo Nie Ching (DAP-Kulai) questioned if Pandikar had the power to issue a gag order on Arul, who has been actively making statements in the media defending 1MDB.

"No, I don't have the power to issue a gag order on anyone. Even when I use my power in this House you MPs don't listen to me," Pandikar replied.

Questions dismissed

However, he did not elaborate on why Arul can no longer be a PAC witness and instead questioned why the debate was being rushed through.

"Why can't this be held after the PAC findings are presented to the House? [...] this debate will not provide answers," Pandikar said.

He refused to entertain a question on what his ruling would be if another MP was to debate Arul instead of Pua as is being planned.

Pandikar also dismissed a request from Lim Lip Eng (DAP-Segambut) who asked the

speaker to delay making a decision until Pua was in the House to defend himself.

The speaker said there were no House rules which required him to wait for an MP to be present before making a ruling.

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Source: <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/318213>