

Speaker rejects motion to split PM, finance minister portfolios

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PARLIAMENT | Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia has rejected in chambers a private member's bill by Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli to separate the prime minister and finance ministry portfolios.

Pandikar cited the Ministerial Functions Act 1969, which said the Yang di-Pertuan Agong has the authority to appoint the prime minister and other ministers.

Rafizi took this to mean that the prime minister and finance minister portfolios can never be legally separated as long as BN is in power.

"As long as BN is in power, any effort to formulate laws to build better conduct by separating the prime minister and finance minister portfolios will never be allowed in the Dewan Rakyat," Rafizi said at a press conference in the Parliament lobby today.

The bill was also rejected on a technicality as it was submitted via e-mail instead of through a letter.

Hence, Rafizi said he will resubmit the bill through the proper channel and hopes Pandikar will reconsider.

Najib Abdul Razak now holds both these portfolios.

Critics have said this had given Najib too much power, which led to the 1MDB crisis.

The prime minister first held the finance portfolio in 1998, when Dr Mahathir Mohamad took over the portfolio during the Asian financial crisis.

Fifth prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also held the finance minister portfolio when he was PM.

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