

**Pandikar suspends two more MPs**  
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Two MPs were suspended from the morning session of the Dewan Rakyat after engaging in a heated argument with Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia.

jeff ooi interview 300707 talkDuring Question Time today, Jeff Ooi (DAP-Jelutong) had attempted to ask a supplementary question by citing an old news report which quotes former Transport Minister Ong Tee Keat stating that upgrading works on the Penang International Airport will be completed by the end of 2011.

Ooi (right) demanded an explanation on why the current transport minister to explain why the deadline was not met.

But before Ooi could finish his question Pandikar dismissed the question on the basis that it was related to a "former transport minister".

An irate Ooi then demanded Pandikar explain his actions and a fierce shouting match ensued. After Ooi refused to back down, Pandikar gave him the marching orders.

Following this, Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah) intervened and urged Pandikar to allow Ooi to complete his question but the speaker said that she should take her seat as she failed to raise a point of order.

fong po kuan and chong chien jen walkout suspended from parliament 061108 03Fong (left) retorted that the speaker was acting emotionally.

"Since this morning Tan Sri, you have been behaving as if we are school children. I'm sorry to (say this) but I think Tan Sri you should go and rest. Maybe you are the one who should rest for awhile," said Fong.

At this point, Pandikar also ordered Fong to be given the boot.

Earlier, Ooi had asked the Transport Ministry on the progress of the project to upgrade the airport under a RM250 million allocation.

The upgrading works was entrusted to Malaysian Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB).

"In terms of policy and application, how many bumiputera contractors have been offered subcontracts for the Penang airport project, including Class F contractors?" he asked.

Ooi also quizzed the ministry on the status of the project and whether the present infrastructure could bear the passenger and cargo traffic volume.

In reply Deputy Transport Minister Abdul Rahim Bakri said replied that the project is expected to drag on till the end of 2011.

"The status of the Penang International Airport upgrading project until Nov 30 is 36.12 percent compared to 41.06 percent in the schedule, where it has been delayed by 4.49 percent.

"For your information the current infrastructure can only handle 3.5 million passengers annually, with the airport's maximum passenger capacity in 2009 reaching 3.32 million, expected to reach 4 million for 2010," he said.

Subjudicial question raised

Even after both the MPs were sent out, the argument did not die down as Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, too sought an explanation from Pandikar for denying Ooi an answer.

"The question from Jelutong (Ooi) was on the level of bumiputera subcontractors participation in Penang airport project, why isn't it relevant? Even before he could state his case, Tan Sri, he was asked to get out," said Anwar.

parliament pandikar amin anwar ibrahim lim kit siang dap pkr pc 121108 02Pandikar (left) defended the move, saying that he is well versed in Parliament's Standing Orders.

"Since the day I've been here I've listened patiently and acted fairly to the best of my ability... I often remind everyone (to follow the rules) but I'm the one who is dragged into the arguments even the standard of Parliament is being questioned," said Pandikar.

"I stopped Jelutong because although he can ask questions (and if) the question is detailed and the minister can give a written answer but when Jelutong said that a (former) transport minister who is on trial - that makes it subjudice - don't you understand this?"

It is understood that Pandikar assumed that Ooi was referring to Dr Ling Liong Sik, transport minister from 1986 to 2003 and currently facing trial for allegedly misleading the government in the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) fiasco.

"If you want to raise Parliament's standard, let's discuss but don't accuse me of things when I'm strict (so much as to say) I'm emotional?"

"Every time Batu Gajah (Fong) stands up she is emotional. Have I ever reprimanded anyone unless I see them going overboard?" he asked.

'Pandikar should apologise for misjudgement'

Speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby, Ooi complained that the speaker used an "iron fist" in handling proceedings.

"I asked the second supplementary question to know the reason for the delays in the airport upgrading. If there are delays, then surely some units must be questioned and blamed. That is all. The owner of this project is MAHB, none other than a government-linked company (GLC).

"If the GLC has become severely ill and is dying... they should take medication. If the speaker is also sick, then he ,too, should take medication. I just wanted to ask because the management of the project is unsatisfactory.

"It seems that the speaker read my question and I think he anticipated my questions and he wanted to avoid any embarrassment to the BN government and so he reacted in a way that my question was killed off easily," said Ooi.

His own feeling is that as a first term speaker, Pandikar "has to learn... the system of parliamentary democracy".

"I am very dissatisfied and I apologise to my voters in Jelutong and in Penang and Malaysia generally that we are in for the darkest hour of parliamentary democracy and we have a system which is akin to a kangaroo court," he added.

"I hope Pandikar apologises to the entire Dewan Rakyat for his misjudgement. Malaysia deserves a better system of presiding in Parliament if not we will just debate in a kangaroo court," said Ooi.

Other MPs also incurred the wrath of the speaker for their usual antics of trying to ask questions deemed irrelevant.

BN backbencher Bung Mokhtar Radin (Kinabatangan) was reprimanded for trying to add an explanation instead of just posing a direct supplementary question to Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, SK Devamany.

"Questions like that, I don't allow anyone to ask, because it brings information to the minister. I have explained to Kinabatangan that I allow extra questions, but those must questions must be short and tight," said Pandikar before hushing Bung Mohktar.

"I am only showing my standard. I don't compromise with anyone, and I don't want to seen as being bought over by anyone. I won't allow anyone to go against Standing Orders," Pandikar retorted.

Yesterday, Azmin Ali (PKR-Gombak) attempted to move an emergency motion which was rejected. Azmin had accused Pandikar of being an Umno stooge, saying "the speaker must have been bought over by Umno".