

Anwar's second 'mega-project' motion rejected
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Syed Jamal Zahiid

Deputy speaker Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar today rejected an emergency motion filed by Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim calling for the formation of a royal commission to probe into the government's RM11.31 billion high-speed broadband project.

In his motion, Anwar said Najib Abdul Razak, as finance minister, had approved the project in haste and at a high cost on Sept 16.

The matter was of public interest therefore requiring it to be addressed urgently, he added.

Although agreeing with Anwar that the issue was of public interest, the deputy speaker however rejected it on the grounds that it was not urgent enough.

Anwar (PKR-Permatang Pauh), who filed the motion yesterday, tried in vain to urge Wan Junaidi to reconsider his decision.

"The matter is urgent because the broadband project will be handed over to the national telecommunications company (Telekom) and this project will be monopolised by one company.

"The government has repeatedly in the past said that it wants to eradicate the practice of monopoly but what is happening (now) is a form of monopoly. I urge the speaker to take time to consider," he said.

However, Wan Junaidi replied that once the speaker makes a ruling, the decision cannot be overturned.

"Just like decisions made in the past by other speakers, I cannot overturn my decision nor do I, as stipulated in the parliament standing orders, need to give any reason or justification for my decision," he said.

Earlier motion rejected as well

On Monday, Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia rejected another emergency motion filed by Anwar to form a royal commission to look into two other 'mega projects' as well - the RM4.26 billion purchase of Bank Internasional Indonesia shares by Maybank Bhd and the botched RM1.7 billion procurement of 12 helicopters from Eurocopter.

The motion was filed last Wednesday night and was intended to be tabled the next day but Pandikar had deferred the Dewan's decision to Monday.

According to party sources, the motion was rejected through a written letter that was sent directly to the opposition leader's office.

In this motion, Anwar had blamed Najib for approving the purchase of Bank Internasional Indonesia through Maybank on Sept 30. He described this as a waste of the nation's funds as the shares were over-priced.

As for the helicopter deal - struck when Najib was still defence minister - the Public Accounts Committee had cleared the government of any wrongdoing in the matter.

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