

Pandikar Shoots Down 1MDB Debate

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia today ruled that the debate on 1MDB can only proceed if Tony Pua steps down as a member of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

In addition, he said 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) President and Group Executive Director Arul Kanda Kandasamy cannot appear as a witness before the PAC in its probe into 1MDB if he wants to debate Pua.

"This is necessary to maintain the transparency of investigation and proceedings conducted by PAC involving 1MDB in line with the rules of the Dewan Rakyat.

"An open debate can adversely affect the PAC investigation proceeding on 1MDB and lead rise to public prejudice on the credibility of the parties involved in the investigation," he said during the Dewan Rakyat sitting today.

Pandikar Amin stressed that any disclosure of information or matters submitted before a committee is subject to the conditions provided for under the Standing Order 23.

He said Standing Order 23(1)(e) stated the progress of a proceeding which had not been reported to the House could not be divulged, and as such, a debate which involved questions and answer from two parties on the issue clearly contravened the Standing Order.

"Seeing the matter to be debated is still under PAC probe, whatever information issued in the debate can be regarded as an avenue to discuss something which is immature, seeing the Committee's report has yet to be submitted to the House.

"Any statement which is issued in the debate too will have a tendency to lead rise to accusations on the nature, self of an individual which is clearly not allowed under 23(1)(0)," he said.

He said by right Pua and Arul Kanda should wait until the final report of the PAC investigation was over and tabled in the Dewan Rakyat at the end of this year, before the debate is held.

"I have to carry out my duty as Speaker, in this matter, namely, not allowing a debate between the Petaling Jaya Utara MP and Arul Kanda Kandasamy, because, currently, PAC is investigating (1MDB).

"So, the (PAC) investigation should be continued following the Standing Order," said Pandikar, who also questioned the rationale of why the debate should be held now.

"If the government continues with the debate, I will not involve myself in it and will gladly step down as Speaker. My stand is clear," he said, while at the same time reminding Pua that his task in the PAC was as an investigator and not prosecutor.

"If Petaling Jaya Utara (Pua) is allowed to debate, it means he becomes a prosecutor, not investigator," he said.

On Saturday, Arul Kanda had taken up Pua's challenge to hold the debate on the 1MDB issue without any conditions.

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