

1MDB dominates Dewan Rakyat this week
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The proposed debate between 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) boss Arul Kanda Kandasamy and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) member Tony Pua dominated the Dewan Rakyat this week.

When Arul Kanda agreed to Pua's challenge last Saturday to have the debate, both government and opposition members of parliament reacted positively to it.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Dr Salleh Said Keruak even suggested that it be held as soon as possible and televised live on RTM.

However on Tuesday, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia determined that the debate should not be held.

He said it was to maintain transparency of PAC's investigation and proceedings involving 1MDB, in line with the rules of the Dewan Rakyat.

The speaker said Pua's involvement in the debate prior to the tabling of PAC's final Investigation Report on 1MDB in the Dewan Rakyat at the end of the year, would adversely affect the integrity of the latter.

Delivering his decision at the conclusion of the question and answer session, Pandikar said Pua must resign as a PAC member or dissociate himself from the committee's investigation if he wanted to proceed with the debate.

Nevertheless, he said the debate could be held after PAC had already presented its final investigation report.

Pua who is also Petaling Jaya Utara MP accepted the speaker's decision against proceeding with the debate, albeit without a "full stop".

Opposition Pakatan Harapan not only wanted to challenge Pandikar's decision, they were also determined to hold the debate with Arul Kanda and had named Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli to replace Pua in the encounter.

Pua is DAP national publicity secretary while Rafizi is also vice president and secretary-general of PKR.

The Dewan Rakyat on Wednesday also began winding up the debate which went on for six days since October 26, on the Supply Bill 2016 tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on October 23.

Meanwhile, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed while winding up the debate for his ministry on Thursday drew the keen attention of the House.

He announced that the contents of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) would be available that afternoon for public scrutiny.

Noting that several MPs had called for the agreement to be disclosed, Mustapa said the MPs may now be able to discuss and debate as well as make decisions on it in Parliament.

He said the TPPA would be tabled at the Dewan Rakyat in a special sitting early January or February.

Eight remaining ministries will wind up their debate on the Supply Bill 2016 on November 16. The session was adjourned in conjunction with Deepavali next week.

The current Dewan Rakyat sitting will conclude on December 3. – Bernama, November 7, 2015.

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