

Najib brushes off corruption claims
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Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak ably played the role of a cool politician today by simply brushing off allegations of corruption raised by ex-deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim in a recent internationally televised interview.

"I will not react. I do not react to Anwar," said Najib after chairing a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting at the Umno headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Yesterday, Al-Jazeera aired a 30-minute long interview on the Riz Khan talkshow programme where Anwar was interviewed on several topics including corruption in Malaysia.

"There are complicities over the huge and massive commissions accrued by the government involving the Defence Ministry, Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak," said Anwar during the interview.

"These are not mere allegations. People have adduced evidence - US\$120 million commission though submarine deals from France, US\$100 million commission for Sukhoi jets from Russia.

"What is done? Nothing. Are there investigations? None."

The Najib link

In 2003, Malaysia ordered 18 Russian Sukhoi-30MKM jets in a deal reportedly worth RM3.2 billion. Meanwhile, the purchase of three submarines is reportedly worth RM4.6 billion.

Previously, Anwar had urged the Defence Ministry to clear the air pertaining to allegations that former minister Mohd Adib Adam had siphoned off RM380 million paid to a company as commission for the fighter jets deal.

In December last year, the government had conceded in Parliament that the Defence Ministry signed a contract with a company worth Euro 114 million (about RM490 million) for 'coordination and support services' in the submarine deal, but denied that the payment was a form of 'commission'.

The company, Perimekar, is owned by Ombak Laut, which Najib's close associate Abdul Razak Baginda co-owns. Abdul Razak is presently embroiled in high-profile murder case.

In January, Anwar had called for a probe of Najib's involvement in the submarine purchase.

Corruption cases

When quizzed about the recent high-profile corruption cases, Najib said the matter was not raised during the supreme council meeting.

"It is not a matter for the supreme council to discuss. (It is under) investigation (by the authorities)," said Najib, who chaired the meeting as Prime Minister and Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was overseas.

Explosive corruption allegations have been leveled against Kubang Pasu Umno chief Mohd Johari Bahrum and more recently Sabah Umno chief Musa Aman.

The police and the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) are presently investigating Mohd Johari, who is also deputy internal security minister, for allegedly accepting RM5 million in bribes to free detainees held under the Emergency Ordinance.

A 24-page police report was lodged last week against Musa as Sabah chief minister over allegations of abuse of power, corruption and money-laundering.

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