

PM: Sarbani's death different from Teoh's
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Prime minister today said that the death of Customs officer Ahmad Sarbani Mohamed at the Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission headquarters cannot be compared with that of Teoh Beng Hock's.

"As I understand (it, Ahmad Sarbani) went to the MACC office voluntarily to change his statement and died in the blink of an eye, just as an MACC officer was calling the investigating officer.

"He was not being questioned. It is different to the Teoh Beng Hock case," Najib Abdul Razak told a press conference in Kuching in reference to the Selangor aide who fell to his death at the Selangor MACC office in 2009.

However, the premier added, a comprehensive investigation has been ordered, and the operation under which Ahmad Sarbani and scores of others were probed by MACC will resume.

"We must remember that MACC is doing this to safeguard national funds.

"Corruption is serious and if we can stop this racket, which has been ongoing for years, then it is the rakyat who will benefit.

"We never expected (this death) but we must remember the initial reason for the operation," he said.

Ahmad Sarbani (left), 56, who served as assistant director at the Selangor office of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department, was found dead yesterday after falling off the third floor of the MACC building in Jalan Cochrane.

He was among 62 officers arrested in a joint operation embracing Penang, Johor, Selangor and Pahang by a special task force comprising the MACC, the Inland Revenue Board, the Customs Department and Bank Negara.

One officer was found to have several million ringgit in his bank account while another had almost RM1 million. Two others had more than RM500,000 each.

The sweeping raid also found gold bars in the house of one officer while another had more than RM600,000 in cash stored in several bags.

Ahmad Sarbani had reportedly been released on bail two days ago.

In a related development, inspector-general of police Ismail Omar has also urged all quarters not to equate the death of the customs assistant director with that of Teoh.

"The two cases are different in term of facts. We can't conclude that something has gone wrong," he told reporters after visiting Serdang Hospital today.

According to Bernama, Ismail said the police should be trusted to investigate the case

according to established procedures.

"Let the investigation, prosecution and trial process proceed. We respect the judiciary system in our country and eventually the truth will be known."

Ismail said police are conducting a thorough investigation of the case, including the autopsy result conducted by UKM hospital.

"I can't reveal the result (autopsy). What I can say is that the autopsy went smoothly, investigation was done at the scene and witnesses were also questioned," he was quoted as saying.

'Bizzare' for rejecting sex video RCI

On a separate matter, Najib said that it was "bizzare" that the Opposition is going against the proposal to set up a royal commission of inquiry on the sex video allegedly involving an opposition leader.

He was referring to the proposal by former Malacca chief minister Rahim Thamby Chik for an RCI to be set up to determine whether the man recorded having sex with an unknown woman is or isn't PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Aziz endorsed the idea, saying those close to Anwar - such as his wife and PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail who had denied the man in the video was Anwar - do not qualify to testify on the matter.

According to Nazri, only a panel of neutral parties could make a credible identification of the individual in the video.

Touching on this today, Najib said: "Usually it is them (the Opposition) who always jump up and down for an RCI for whatever issue, it is their first reaction.

"But now they are being silent, which goes to show that the opposition is inconsistent and will only do things that benefit them," he said.

When asked whether he had seen the video himself, Najib shook his head.

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