

Jabu challenged over RM355 million contracts
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THE ANTIDOTE Sarawak Report, a UK-based website dedicated to investigative journalism, has published a list of government contracts worth RM355 million awarded to KACC Sdn Bhd, a company owned by, among others, a daughter and a cousin of Deputy Chief Minister Alfred Jabu Numpang.

The Construction Industry Development Board or CIDB, a statutory body under the purview of the Works Ministry, listed out three government contracts awarded to KACC since 2000.

The public contracts awarded were for the construction of a Sarawak Rangers (Royal Rangers) camp in Muara Tuang by the Defence Ministry, worth RM211 million; a Marine Police base in Muara Tebas by the Internal Security Ministry, worth RM115 million; and a water treatment plant in Bintulu by the Works Ministry, worth RM29 million.

According to the CIDB website, KACC has won several other large construction contracts, worth RM15.5 million, from petroleum companies.

All in the family

Sarawak Report notes that KACC's key owners are family members of Abdul Taib Mahmud administration figures.

Jennifer Bermas Jabu, Alfred Jabu's eldest daughter, owns 19 percent of KACC. Robert Lawson Chuat, Alfred Jabu's cousin and BN state assemblyperson for Bukit Saban, is a 15 percent shareholder.

Mohamad Taufik Abdul Ghani, brother to Taib's hand-picked state secretary, Mohd Morshidi Abdul Ghani, owns 20 percent.

Two precocious siblings, Siti Yuhani Bustari, 34, and Mohamad Subky Bustari, 29, boast 25 percent and 18 percent ownership of the company, respectively. They also share an uncle, Fadillah Yusof, deputy federal minister for science, technology and innovation.

Sarawak Report was scornful of the idea that Jennifer Bermas Jabu was qualified to take on such construction projects.

The website suggested that she and other owners of KACC might have sub-contracted the projects out for a staggering profit instead.

"Did her tender, 'negotiated' along with this group of other political proxies, represent the best value for money for Sarawak?" Sarawak Report asked.

Neither KACC nor Alfred Jabu has responded so far to the allegations of conflict of interest.

Loyal defenders in difficult times

Alfred Jabu, Fadillah Yusof and Mohd Morshidi have more in common than wealthy families. They are also loyal defenders of Taib in desperate times.

alfred jabu Jabu (right), the DCM; and Fadillah, the deputy federal minister; are leading members of Taib's party, PBB.

Both adamantly refused to accept the unequivocal findings of a federal ministry report, released in 2009, stating that logging company employees had raped Penan schoolgirls as young as 10, in Baram, Sarawak.

Logging companies in Sarawak have, despite their indiscretions, been loyal supporters of Taib's 30-year reign as chief minister and minister in charge of forestry.

Mohd Morshidi waded into the logging debate by writing to London broadsheet the Sunday Times last year. He insisted that Sarawak's logging licences are awarded under due process, and are not the personal gift of the chief minister. He did not, however, elaborate on how Taib's family had accumulated their vast global fortune.

'Jangan lawan towkay'

Other Taib allies, including state land minister James Masing, must be wondering whether lurid financial disclosures will be made about themselves in the near future.

The rewards lavished on Taib's political servants certainly contrast sharply with the punishments inflicted on his opponents.

Sri Aman DAP branch chief Leon Jimat Donald in glasses with disabled frusis lebi mong dagang letter This was highlighted by a stupid and badly-misjudged official letter written by a junior state minister, Mong Dagang, to local district officials.

Mong demanded that a disabled man, Frusis Lebi (left in photo), have his state benefits revoked, because Frusis had supported the opposition PKR during last April's state election.

State PKR chief Baru Bian fired back angrily: "Being in government is not a playground game for small-minded and silly schoolboys who have not gained maturity in thought and actions. It is not about reward and punishment."

In response to growing national criticism of Mong, James Masing was quoted by the Borneo Post as saying that Frusis must "follow the rule of life, that is, 'jangan lawan towkay'... In any organisation, including political parties, we cannot go against the boss. That's the golden rule in life which we must observe."

PKR state assemblyperson See Chee How (left) took exception to Masing's distasteful remark, calling him arrogant.

"Masing should be taught that the relationship between the government and the people is like a ship and the water. The water can keep you afloat, it can also sink you," he told reporters.

It appears, thus far, that Taib has kept his head above water, despite being buffeted by wave after wave of allegations of corrupt practices.

But can Jabu, Fadillah, Mong, Masing, Jacob Dungau Sagan and other Taib supporters do the same, and stay afloat?

They are certainly not as indispensable to the federal BN as Taib appears to be - and several of them may well lose their jobs after the upcoming parliamentary elections.