

Flurry of calls between Azilah and Abdul Razak
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Several telephone calls were made between political analyst Abdul Razak Baginda and the first accused, chief inspector Azilah Hadri, on the night of Altantuya Shaariibuu's murder.

These include one shortly before the murder - stipulated on the charge sheet as between 10pm on Oct 19, 2006 and 1am Oct 20, 2006 - which saw Azilah and corporal Sirul Azhar Umar being convicted and sentenced to death.

Azilah had called Abdul Razak, a close confidant of then deputy prime minister Najib Razak, at 9.41pm on Oct 19, 2006, and the phone conversation lasted 40 seconds.

The call was recorded by the phone company within the vicinity of the Jalan Duta toll booth. The next day, at 10.41am, Azilah again talked to Abdul Razak for 32 seconds.

Azilah and Sirul (right) - both of whom were part of the security detail to protect the deputy premier - were jointly convicted in 2008 of murdering the Mongolian woman in a jungle clearing in Shah Alam six years ago.

However, the nature of conversation between Abdul Razak and Azilah was not known.

Azilah and Sirul took Altantuya outside Abdul Razak's home in Damansara Heights on the evening of Oct 19, after private investigator P Balasubramaniam, who was then working for the political analyst, handed her over to them.

Abdul Razak and his family were not at home at that time as they had gone out to break fast (it was Ramadan).

Azilah, however, had stated in his defence that he was nowhere near the vicinity of the said murder scene but claimed he was having a meal with his fiancée, Norazila Baharuddin, in Wangsa Maju.

The phone records are stated in the 70-page judgment by Shah Alam High Court judge Mohd Zaki Md Yasin, which was released recently following his verdict delivered over two years ago.

Longest call lasted a minute

There were also a number of other phone calls between Azilah and Abdul Razak on Oct 19 - the night of the murder - beginning at 7.57pm, then again at 8.36pm, 8.41pm, 8.54pm, 8.55pm, 9.08pm and the final one at 9.41pm.

The longest call of the seven calls was made by Abdul Razak to Azilah which lasted one minute.

The phone logs were used to prove that the two accused were close to the murder scene but judge Zaki did not touch on the nature of the phone conversations.

He however noted that the phone call records were heavily challenged by the defence team, which claimed they were not authentic and that they could have been altered or tampered with.

"As for me, I must admit that these data and their operations as explained by all those witnesses are highly technical. Thus, in the absence of other rebuttal witnesses, I am accepting the evidence on the face of it.

"All four (phone company) witnesses had testified as to the creation, production, arrangement and validation of those logs, the data of which were retrieved from their data system," said the judge.

The phone records dated between Oct 18, 2006 and Oct 28, 2006 run six pages in the written judgment.

Unanswered questions

It is learnt that the full judgment of the sensational murder case was not provided to the lawyers involved in the trial, but was published in the Current Law Journal 2012 1 CLJ.

The lengthy judgment also mentioned a note written by Abdul Razak, which was found on Azilah's bag with Abdul Razak's full address and his father's full name - Abdullah Malim Baginda.

This, the judge ruled, "was wholly consistent of an innocent man" seeking Azilah's help for the police to patrol the vicinity of Abdul Razak's house following the alleged blackmail by Altantuya, who was his former lover.

There are also the issue of alleged threats made by Abdul Razak when private eye Balasubramaniam (left) and his assistant K Suras Kumar went to Altantuya's room at Hotel Malaya, which was not addressed in the judgment.

Neither were allegations that Altantuya's travel records of entering Malaysia were allegedly deleted.

No motive was established for the murder and the judge said that while motive is relevant, it is not essential.

Both Azilah and Sirul have since filed an appeal against their convictions and the Court of Appeal will be setting a date tomorrow to hear the application.

The appeal has been pending for two years while awaiting the completion of the written judgment by Zaki.

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