

PKR queries Jasbir's move to resurrect Altantuya's ghost

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By Susan Loone

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim questioned why the "architect" of the Scorpene submarine procurement, Jasbir Singh Chahl, has recently resurrected the issue of deceased Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu's involvement in the RM7.3 billion deal.

Jasbir is a director of Terasasi, a Hong Kong-based firm owned by well-connected political analyst Abdul Razak Baginda, who was freed of a charge of abetting the murder of Altantuya without having to call his defence in 2008.

Anwar said no one has suggested that Altantuya was involved in the negotiations for the purchase of the two submarines in 2002, when Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was then defence minister.

"Whether Jasbir knows Altantuya or not is between him and her. We wonder why he has chosen to speak about this when nobody said she was part of the negotiations, nobody made reference to her in that role," he said when met in Seberang Jaya during the weekend.

"What we are questioning specifically is her role as Abdul Razak's translator. This has been quite established already," stressed the Permatang Pauh MP.

Anwar said that Suaram - the human rights NGO - which has filed a case against DCNS, which allegedly paid hefty commissions to officers in the Malaysian government for the deal in French courts - can probably provide "proof" related to Altantuya's role, which is documented.

He added that he had seen copies of the travel receipts of Altantuya with Abdul Razak on a trip to Macau, China.

Abdul Razak's company Perimekar was also paid RM574 million by the government for providing coordination and support services for the submarines.

The company is currently being probed by the Paris-based court as well for corruption alongside DCNS, a French naval giant.

Commissions outlawed in France

Commissions have been outlawed in France following an OECD Convention on Bribery, which the country ratified in 2000.

But when interviewed on NST, Jasbir said the money paid to Perimekar was not a "bribe".

"The allegations are made in the French courts, let them defend that this money disbursed to Perimekar is not a bribe," said Anwar.

"I have made this analogy before, when a policeman who takes RM50, it is considered corruption, when a minister takes millions, it is called commission," he added.

"Whatever it is, any form of abuse cannot be tolerated," he stressed.

Despite the revelation by Jasbir, Abdul Razak has told investigators, while he was probed for her murder in 2006, that he had travelled to France with Altantuya in 2005.

On Sept 29, 2000, according to French court document D00015, published by Asia Sentinel regional editor John Berthelsen, DCNI, a DCN subsidiary, "took corrective actions" after France joined the bribery convention.

He wrote that contracts concluded after that date were to be routed to Eurolux and Gifen, companies held by Jean-Marie Boivin, DCN's former finance chief.

He added that Boivin is being investigated for having played a central role in the "corrective actions," with what were described as "outlandish commissions" travelling through the welter of companies that he established in tax havens around the world.

Among the documents is one that shows Boivin paid to send Abdul Razak on a jaunt to Macau with his then-girlfriend, Altantuya Shaariibuu, a Mongolian national who was later murdered by two of Najib's bodyguards.

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