

Morais' disappearance a déjà vu for Gobala family

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Reports on the disappearance of DPP Anthony Kevin Morais have rekindled the sense of déjà vu for the family of businessperson K Gobala Guru, who went missing two years ago under mysterious circumstances.

Gobala's brother, businessperson K Dasnamurthy, 47, says he can understand the anguish the Morais family is going through and is hoping that what had befallen him would not happen to the missing DPP's family.

On Feb 2, 2013, Gobala, then 46, who ran a movie production house and several dance clubs, went missing.

Dasnamurthy told Malaysiakini in an interview that his brother had left from his house in Seri Kembangan that evening to go to a convenience store in Cheras to purchase some magazines.

“Two men followed him to the convenience store, one of them was a policeman wearing a pink shirt. When my brother came out, the two introduced themselves as police officers and wanted my brother to go inside a Naza Citra, in which there were two other people.

“My brother was said to have refused and they then agreed to go in his BMW car to a police station, with one of the men driving.

“However, when he (Gobala) noticed that the car was not headed to a police station, he jumped out and tried to run to the nearby Hotel Mirama near Jalan Maharajalela but he was caught by the four and bundled back into the car,” Dasnamurthy said, claiming the whole incident was captured on Hotel Mirama's CCTV cameras.

Dasnamurthy said he then received a call that his brother was apparently arrested and went to the hotel. Upon arriving there, he met several police officers who denied they had arrested his brother.

He then checked several police stations and discovered that there was no arrest record for Gobala.

Dasnamurthy said the next day, police recovered a burnt-out car at Ulu Yam but unlike the Morais case, the vehicle was burnt beyond recognition.

However, he said, there was a turn of luck as Gobala had replaced the sports rims on his car recently and his driver identified one of these.

“Not all the sports rims were burnt. One was recognisable as my brother had changed it

less than a week before. So his driver recognised this while other identification, including the engine and chassis numbers, were burnt," he said.

Identification parade held

Dasnamurthy said Gobala's wife, V Satiavani, and the family tried to offer a reward for information leading to his recovery but this was to no avail.

It was then that he managed to recover another CCTV recording from the convenience shop, which had a clear shot of the two men who had come there while tailing Gobala.

From there, Dasnamurthy said, he launched his own investigation based on the photographs obtained from the CCTV recording.

He showed these to a police friend, who supposedly identified one of them as a policeman by name of 'Amran' who was then said to be attached to the Shah Alam police Serious Crimes Division.

He also said police then gave out a photograph of the suspect, which was published in several dailies on Feb 28 and March 1 last year.

However, Dasnamurthy then said that then KL CID chief, Ku Chin Wah, as well as Bukit Aman CID chief Hadi Ho Abdullah, dismissed police involvement in the disappearance of Gobala and claimed that policemen were not in the vicinity of the convenience store.

He said the top cops claimed that the policeman identified as 'Amran' was at the Viva Mall in Cheras at the material time but Dasnamurthy maintained that his own investigations, plus information from a telco company, revealed that 'Amran' was 150 metres away, near Mirama Hotel, at the time.

In November, following family pressure, 'Amran' was brought in for an identification parade at the Dang Wangi district police headquarters.

Dasnamurthy said the owner of a stall that Gobala frequented outside the convenience store and an employee of Gobala, who was waiting for him at Mirama Hotel, identified the man.

"Gobala's staff immediately identified the policeman. However, the stall owner said he did not want to identify the man as he feared for his safety. But he told me that the person was one of the men who picked up my brother from the convenience store," Dasnamurthy said.

A modus operandi?

Since then, he added, there has not been any action taken against the policeman, said to be a part-time bouncer, or any news about Gobala's whereabouts.

Dasnamurthy said he was undeterred and tried to press his case with the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission, which initially said it lacked the manpower required.

However, the commission eventually appointed an officer this year to take down details of the case, but there has not been any progress to date, he said.

Following this, Dasnamurthy hopes that Morais' family would not have to go through the pain and suffering what his family and Gobala's wife went through.

“Until today, Satiavani and our family are traumatised by what happened two years ago and when the disappearance of Morais came up, we could not help but feel a sense of déjà vu and concern over what happened,” Dasnamurthy said.

PSM leader S Arutchelvan (photo), who accompanied Dasnamurthy for the interview, expressed concern over the spate of missing persons, including Morais, and wondered whether there was a modus operandi adopted by the police to get rid of their vehicles.

“Was Morais involved in a high-profile case resulting in his disappearance?” Arutchelvan asked.

Morais, the Trials and Appeals Division deputy head at the Attorney- General's Chambers, has been reported missing since Sept 5.

Police have to yet to identify if a burnt car found in Hilir Perak following his disappearance was the one used by Morais.