

## **COMMENT | Who is really behind Albert?**

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COMMENT | The resignation of Shamsul Iskandar Akin as the senior political secretary to the prime minister has added another ripple to a political climate already strained by accusations, counter-narratives and the high stakes of the Sabah state election.

What began as a dispute over a cancelled mineral exploration licence has evolved into a public spectacle, fuelled by businessperson Albert Tei's dramatic claims and carefully curated disclosures.

The timing alone invites scrutiny. His revelations appear designed to intrude on the election campaign and cast doubt on the credibility of the prime minister.

Tei now alleges that Shamsul was directly involved in the mining controversy. He claims to have handed over RM629,000 after being convinced that the funds would help recover money he had channelled to political actors in Sabah. He insists that he has compiled more than three hundred pages of documents, complete with WhatsApp screenshots and receipts.

He even recounts thousands spent on premium cigars and tailored suits for Shamsul. Most striking are his claims of cash transactions that stretch across Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur and Puchong. At face value, the list appears detailed. Yet detail is not the same as proof.

The pattern becomes clearer when one observes the sequence of events. Since November, Tei has released a chain of videos and documents implicating several Gabungan Rakyat Sabah politicians.

His accusations not only challenge the state administration but also coincide with his own legal troubles. He and two state assemblypersons are already facing charges in court. These competing claims create confusion, but they also reveal that the controversy is far from a simple story of victim and perpetrator.

What is unfolding in Sabah is not merely a dispute about money or licences. It reflects a broader evolution in Malaysian political narrative where influence is increasingly pursued through narrative battles rather than policy debates.

The public is no longer confronted with straightforward accusations. Instead, they are presented with curated storylines designed to shape perception long before evidence reaches any courtroom.

When allegations are drip-fed in stages, timed with electoral cycles and

accompanied by private meetings with opposition figures who then appear to echo similar talking points, the intention is not only to accuse but to engineer a particular outcome. In this environment, the truth becomes secondary to the power of the narrative itself.

## **Theatrical**

Those who watched Tei's videos likely sensed a theatrical quality. The presentations are polished, deliberate and constructed to lead viewers toward a predetermined narrative.

Yet when the screenshots are examined, there is no explicit indication that Shamsul promised Tei any form of official assistance.

What appears instead is a request for financial help. There is no coercion, no threats and no clear exchange of favour. If Tei voluntarily handed over money without receiving anything in return, the situation raises a different set of questions.

If there is proof of a quid pro quo, then he is not simply a whistleblower but an active participant in bribery. If there is no such proof, the payments resemble political donations or financial support, which complicates the narrative he is attempting to construct.

This leads to the next question. If Tei truly possessed evidence of corruption, why has he not gone directly to the MACC? Or is it because he lost trust and confidence in the MACC?

Such a cliché. Why disclose everything through videos, selective leaks? Why amplify the allegations during a crucial election period instead of asserting them through institutional channels that carry legal weight? The preference for media exposure over formal investigation suggests the possibility of a different motive.

### **Doubtful behaviour**

His behaviour also raises doubts. The timing of the recordings suggests deliberate staging, not genuine alarm. The money had already been given in earlier meetings, yet the recordings began only later, as if designed to secure verbal confirmation from the same individuals.

When someone waits until a second or third encounter to start filming, the situation resembles an attempt to construct a narrative rather than expose wrongdoing. It looks less like exploitation and more like a carefully arranged setup.

The viral video involving a woman linked to Tei further reinforces the sense that these were not spontaneous interactions but scenes prepared to serve a

particular storyline.

None of this absolves any political figure of responsibility. The allegations deserve investigation. Those implicated, whether from GRS or the federal administration, must answer for their actions.

But the public also deserves clarity about who is directing the narrative. Who funds Tei's elaborate efforts? Who benefits from destabilising the Sabah government? Who gains from casting suspicion on the Prime Minister's Office?

### **How far does this network go?**

This pattern also exposes a deeper vulnerability in our political culture. Too many actors now operate on the assumption that the public can be swayed more effectively through spectacle than through verified fact.

The reliance on leaked conversations, staged recordings, and timed disclosures suggests a political landscape where perception is weaponised, and where the line between whistleblowing and manipulation is deliberately blurred.

The longer these games are allowed to continue, the more difficult it becomes for Malaysians to distinguish truth from theatre.

Tei himself claims to have a 300-page dossier. If such a document exists, it belongs in the hands of investigators, not the court of public opinion. Until it is submitted formally, the public is left watching a performance without knowing the scriptwriter.

A case of this scale should not be tried through social media releases, choreographed videos or political rallies. It should be tested in court, where every party is compelled to present evidence, not insinuation.

The most important step now is transparency. All individuals involved, whether accusers or accused, should be brought before the law. Only then will the full truth emerge.

Malaysians deserve to know not only who received money, but also who provided it and why. They deserve to know who stands behind Tei and how far this network extends.

This controversy has grown far beyond a cancelled licence. It has become a test of political integrity, institutional independence and the nation's commitment to due process.

Only a thorough legal examination can strip away performance and reveal what actually occurred in Sabah's mining corridors and political backrooms.

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