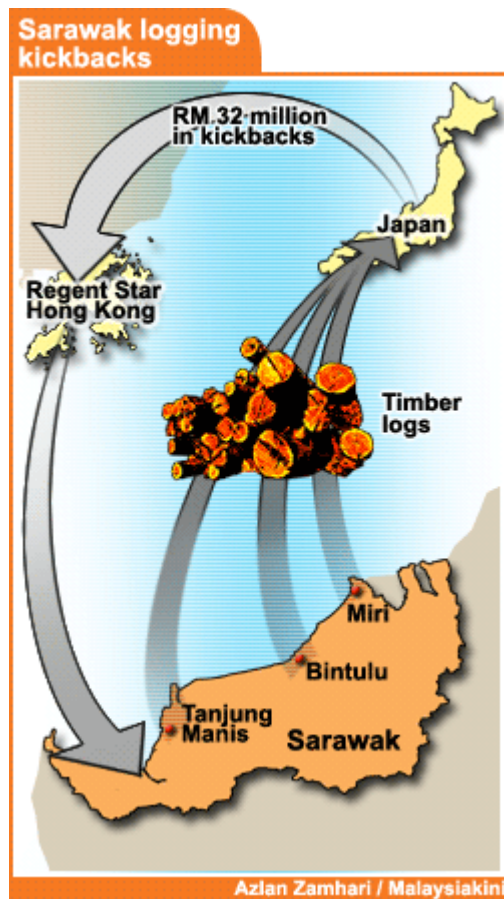


Probe revenue loss in RM32m kickbacks
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Tony Thien

Opposition State Reform Party (Star) wants the federal government to probe the loss of revenue to the nation from the RM32 million payment to a Hong Kong agency with links to Sarawakians in the alleged timber kickbacks scandal.

"The Finance Ministry should send its officers to Japan and contact the Tokyo Metropolitan Taxation Bureau and find out how much was actually paid out by the nine Japanese shipping companies into the offshore account and try to recover the revenue for the government," its president Dr Patau Rubis (left) told malaysiakini.

"Star is deeply concerned about this, and we urge the federal government to take serious steps to recover the taxes," he said, adding that as far as the party, is concerned it does not matter who the Sarawak individuals are.



Dr Patau said this could be just the beginning in uncovering timber money overseas not reported to Malaysian tax authorities.

Beyond that, he added, he would not want to say more as it would be mere speculation.

Rebut allegation

Malaysiakini learnt that following the Japan Times report on the alleged timber kickbacks, further reports appeared in Japanese newspapers that more Japanese shipping lines transporting logs to Japan had also paid such 'commission.'

The Japan Times report on March 29 was based on a Kyodo News Agency report which was also carried by Ashahi Shimbun.

The Kyodo News Agency report said the alleged payment was made to Regent Star which is believed to have links with Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud and his family.

On Monday, Taib issued a signed 10-page personal statement which he read out in the state legislative assembly to rebut the allegation and said he would sue the media in Malaysia and Japan for libel.

He has since filed the writ of summons in the High Court against two media organisations - independent online daily malaysiakini and Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia - as well as two top opposition PKR leaders in Sarawak.

It is understood that none of the parties has been served the suit.

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