

**Be fair in Mongolian murder trial, says Anwar**  
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Former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim today called for fairness in the trial of a political analyst with close ties to the government, who is charged with abetting in the murder of his Mongolian ex-lover.

In one of the most closely watched cases since Anwar's trials for corruption and sodomy in the late 1990s, analyst Abdul Razak Baginda, a close associate of Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, will stand trial from Monday.

Abdul Razak's former lover, Altantuya Shaariibuu, 28, was murdered in October last year and her body blown up with explosives.

Two members of a police unit that guards top leaders including the prime minister and the deputy prime minister are accused of the murder. All three face the death penalty if convicted.

"Everybody hopes for a fair trial with independent judges," Anwar told reporters.

"This case has an international profile and ... it is not only involving the alleged murderers or murderer of Altantuya, but I think the judiciary is also on trial, (and) the police and the attorney-general's chambers," he said.

Anwar, who was sacked from his post by then premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was convicted on corruption and sodomy charges in trials in 1998 and 1999 internationally criticised as lacking in fairness.

### **Conduct of investigations**

Anwar said the conduct of proceedings so far in the murder trial, to be heard in a high court in Shah Alam west of Kuala Lumpur, was already "far from being satisfactory."

Questions remain over the conduct of investigations into the case as well as a "failure to question important key witnesses, including the minister himself," he said, referring to Najib.

Najib, also defence minister, has denied any involvement in the case.

Defence lawyers say they expect up to 75 witnesses to be called by the prosecution in the month-long trial, but about 130 people have been subpoenaed as witnesses.

Altantuya's father, Shaariibuu Setev, who arrived in Malaysia late Friday for the trial, is expected to be a witness, as are three female relatives.

Mongolia has urged transparency in the court proceedings, which will be observed by Mongolian justice and foreign affairs officials.

"We do hope the court procedures will be fair and free from political influence," Mongolia's foreign ministry said in a statement released to AFP last week.

## Timeline: Altantuya murder case

Date	Event
<b>2006</b>	
Nov 6	Discovery of the remains of Altantuya Shariibuu.
Nov 7	Three cops nab over her murder.
Nov 8	Abdul Razak Baginda remanded to help investigations.
Nov 11	Malaysian officials begin DNA tests on the bone and flesh samples found at murder scene.
Nov 15	Two members of the police's elite Special Action Unit (UTK) charged with the murder.
Nov 16	Abdul Razak charged with abetting murder.
Nov 23	Abdul Razak pleas not guilty and freed on RM1 million bail.
<b>2007</b>	
Jan 5	Judge KN Segara fix the murder trial on March 10, 2008 at the Shah Alam High Court and set aside four weeks to hear the case. Abdul Razak unable to extend bail and sent to Sungai Buloh prison.
Jan 11	Court of Appeal dismisses an application by Abdul Razak to extend his RM1 million bail.
Jan 19	During an application for bail, Abdul Razak told the High Court that he had a 'relationship' with Altantuya and gave her US\$10,000 (RM35,000) on several occasions. Bail denied.
March 6	The case is expedited and will now be heard before judicial commissioner Mohd Zaki Md Yassin. Mohd Zaki was later promoted as High Court judge.
March 9	The court fixes the hearing on June 4 and the trial will continue for about one month until June 29.
April 6	Lawyer Karpal Singh says that he will soon file a civil suit for damages by Setev Shaariibuu, father of Altantuya, against the Malaysian government and the three accused.
May 21	The Mongolian government said that it would be sending representatives to monitor the trial.
June 4	Trial to begin.

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