

PI Bala claims Razak Baginda is innocent
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Private investigator P Balasubramaniam now claims that defence analyst Abdul Razak Baginda was innocent in the gruesome murder of Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu.

"He is a scapegoat, he has nothing to do with this matter," said Balasubramaniam, in a press conference held yesterday at Holiday Villa, Leinster Gardens in London today.

Balasubramaniam arrived at this conclusion based on the fact that while Altantuya went missing on October 19, 2006, Abdul Razak continued to employ him to stop the alleged harassment by Altantuya until October 26 .

balasubramaniam holiday villa 070710" That particular night on October 19, he could've pulled me off the job. But he gave me a job, asked me to do until October 26. That means this guy is innocent, as far as I'm concerned."

One of his three lawyers present, Manjeet Singh Dhillon (far left), later interjected and noted that it may have been a ruse.

"Of course, it could easily have been the other way round isn't it... to allay suspicion to (Balasubramaniam), (Abdul Razak) could've kept it going on. That's his personal view anyway."

Abdul Razak was acquitted of abetting two police personnel - Chief Inspector Azilah Hadri and Corporal Sirul Azhar Umar - in the murder of Altantuya on Oct 31, 2008. The two have been sentenced to death for the crime.

Abdul Razak was formerly the confidante to then deputy premier and defence minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Balasubramaniam and his lawyers had flown into London to attend an interview with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) scheduled to be held on July 5 and 6, but it was cancelled by the commission on July 1.

Web of conspiracy

The press conference today, which began at 11am (7pm Malaysia time), was initially planned as a platform to discuss issues raised during a scheduled interview of Balasubramaniam by MACC.

Instead, the press conference saw Balasubramaniam and his lawyers expressing disappointment at MACC's cancellation despite proving his willingness to meet the MACC.

The MACC had been reported saying that they decided not to record Balasubramaniam's statement in London after considering the case of Eric Chia, where a statement taken from a witness abroad was not accepted as evidence in the corruption trial.

Manjeet, however, rubbished MACC's claims.

"Under the criminal procedure code there is actually a section that allows affidavits recorded

overseas to be admissible in courts.

"What we intended to do if MACC had turned up in London, was for Balasubramaniam to highlight a whole series of events surrounding this Altantuya matter that pointed to the centre of a conspiracy web.

"A conspiracy at the very highest level to keep out all references to (Prime Minister) Najib," he said.

MACC's questions will be answered

The MACC had instead mailed questions via courier to another one of Balasubramaniam's lawyers Americk Sidhu in London on Monday.

balasubramaniam holiday villa 060710"We're in the middle of answering them. We're not allowed to reveal the questions, but we will reveal what our answers will be," said Americk.

Under Section 30 (1)(c) of the Anti-Corruption Act, Balasubramaniam can be prosecuted if he did not reply to the questions within 21 days.

Americk also revealed that they had received information yesterday morning that French prosecutors have made an appointment to interview Balasubramaniam on Monday, July 12 at 2pm in Paris.

Last month, French authorities began probing French warship maker DCN over alleged commissions paid in several arms deals, which is illegal under French laws.

Incidentally, Malaysia's procurement of two Scorpene class submarines from DCN is also under probe. Abdul Razak's company was among those who were reportedly involved in the procurement.

Following the interview in France, Balasubramaniam will then return to London to hold another press conference on Tuesday, July 13.

Offer to 'incriminate' Anwar

Meanwhile, Balasubramaniam also alleged that he was offered RM2 million to return to Malaysia before the Hulu Selangor by-election, to lodge a police report accusing opposition figure Anwar Ibrahim of coercing him to perform an interview in Singapore in November 2009.

NONEWhile Balasubramaniam was in Chennai, he received a call from a "good friend" about a week before the Hulu Selangor by-elections.

According to Balasubramaniam, during the call this "friend" passed on a message from ASP Suresh Kumar, who he previously accused of compelling him to retract a statutory declaration implicating Najib in the murder of Altantuya.

"They wanted me to come back to Malaysia, take me to a police station and lodge a report against Anwar, saying that I was forced to do the Singapore interview," said Balasubramaniam.

"Then I would get RM2 million and I could go back to India. I asked them to put all this in

writing and mail it to me."

Balasubramaniam did not receive any response to this request. He noted that he did not know who instructed ASP Suresh to pass on this message to his friend.

Balasubramaniam had flown to Singapore last November to be interviewed by his lawyers Americk, Manjeet and Amarjit Singh.

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