

Court rejects bid to call Najib as witness
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The Shah Alam High Court today dismissed an application by lawyer Karpal Singh to call Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and two senior police officers to testify as witnesses in Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibuu's murder trial.
MCPX

The court also similarly dismissed Karpal's application to recall private investigator P Balasubramaniam to the witness stand in the trial.

Justice Mohd Zaki Yasin said that it was not necessary to call in Najib or to recall Balasubramaniam.

"The court will only exercise that when the need arises, before a decision is made," the judge said, adding that "at this moment, these applications are rejected."

The court said that Karpal did not have the legal standing to make the application as he was not a party to the trial.

karpal singh police report tun mahathir 230508Karpal told reporters that he might appeal the matter to the Court of Appeal.

The veteran lawyer, who is holding a watching brief for the family of the slain 28-year old Altantuya, had filed a court notice on Monday to compel Najib, Balasubramaniam and two other policemen to testify.

"It is necessary because Najib's evidence is needed for the just decision of this case because of the role that he is said to have played," Karpal had said then.

Karpal, also the DAP chairperson, wanted Balasubramaniam recalled following his sworn statement last month, linking Najib to Altantuya, which he swiftly retracted.

The private eye was the first prosecution witness in the case.

Victim's father frustrated

Balasubramaniam, who went missing after his explosive statements, is in hiding in a neighbouring Southeast Asian country, police have said.

Altantuya was murdered in 2006 and her body blown up with explosives in a remote forest, and Najib's close friend, Abdul Razak Baginda, is on trial for abetting the murder.

Abdul Razak, who told the court that Altantuya was his former lover, had hired Balasubramaniam to keep her away from him before she was murdered.

Najib has denied ever meeting her.

parliament 2008 first day 280408 setevMongolian honorary consul Syed Abdul Rahman AlHabshi, who was present at Wednesday's proceedings, said Altantuya's father, Setev

Shaariibuu, expressed his "frustration" over the way the trial was going.

"He is frustrated, he can't see any light at the end of the tunnel. Where is justice?" he told AFP.

The court hearing began on June 18, 2007, but has been caught in a web of complex legal proceedings.

The judge has yet to decide if government lawyers have a case against Abdul Razak and the two policemen.

Aliran: Don't reject because of technicalities

Meanwhile, reform movement Aliran today described the dismissal of Karpal's application as a "great shock to all those praying for justice to prevail".

Aliran president P Ramakrishnan said that Karpal, although not directly involved in the case, should be allowed to make the application in the interest of justice.

"Surely Karpal could be treated as a friend of the court and be allowed to make this application in the interest of justice," he said.

"The deputy prime minister's name for whatever reason keeps cropping up now and then in relation to this case and this would have provided him with a golden opportunity to vindicate himself and lay to rest whatever suspicion that may be lurking around," said Ramakrishnan.

He also said that Balasubramaniam ought to have been recalled to ascertain the veracity of his statement as a witness.

"When these two crucial issues are hanging in the air begging for an answer, how can the court slam the door on this matter?"

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