

1. Former Sarawak Hospital staff faces 16 graft charges

KUCHING: A former Sarawak General Hospital assistant safety officer was charged at the Special Corruption Court here today, with 16 counts of corruption involving RM201,351. Mohamad Don Adi Morshidi, 34, pleaded not guilty when the charges framed under Section 165 of the Penal Code were read out to him. He was alleged to have committed the offences - collecting monthly inducements ranging from RM4,748 to RM21,000, from the hospital's security contractor Kassim Rosli - every month from January to December, 2014. The alleged payments were to induce him to certify that all security personnel at the hospital had turned up for their daily work as specified in the terms and conditions of the contract. The payment deposited at a bank here were then cashed out by two women. Asked if he had anything to say to the court, Mohamad Don Adi requested for the second mention of his case to be held in May next year. He said he had now been transferred to Pahang, adding that he needed more time to get more money to hire a lawyer. He urged the court to consider he had cooperated with Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigators. Judge Nixon Kennedy fixed Nov 14, 16 and 17 this year as dates for the trial, saying the court had to dispose off corruption cases within six months. He fixed Nov 11 as pre-trial management for the accused and advised him to hire a lawyer or seek help from the Legal Aid Bureau. Mohamad Don Adi was given a RM16,000 bail of which a sum of RM6,000 was ordered to be paid in cash, and the rest in two sureties with fixed monthly salaries. Mohd Ikwan Mohd Ibrahim prosecuted for the MACC. -- BERNAMA

2. Government gives greenlight to include A-G, MACC for projects worth RM500m and above, says Ali Hamsa

PUTRAJAYA: The government today has agreed that all projects worth RM500 million and more should involve the Auditor-General (A-G) and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ali Hamsa said the prime minister, the A-G and MACC have agreed to the suggestion which was aimed at curbing abuses and corruption. "They have given their okay (on this matter). Similar practice (getting the involvement of MACC and the A-G) has been applied in the past for mega projects. "Now, we will proceed from mega projects to government projects worth RM500 million and above," he said. Last Thursday, Ali reportedly said that the A-G and MACC's senior officer could be included as exco members in the meetings for certain government projects, adding that the involvement of both these agencies were necessary as a proactive measure to avoid abuses in the public sector. Ali was met today at Association of Wives of Civil Servants and Women Civil Servants (Puspanita)'s annual religious conference. Also present was Ali's wife Puan Sri Rohani Abdullah, who is also Puspanita president. Earlier, he presented RM130,000 of Puspanita's welfare contribution to 41 old folks activity centres located nationwide, five secondary and four primary schools that had special education classes in the administrative capital and to students of Puspanita's Special Needs Children Al-Quran classes. On the Congress of

Unions Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs)'s call to consider a posthumous promotion to Customs officer Anisah Ali who was killed while on duty in a road accident in Kelantan last week, the chief secretary said due processes to proceed with the move had commenced. "We will promote her posthumously from what have been suggested (by Cuepacs) from Grade 22 to Grade 26," said Ali. Anisah, 54, and two other Customs officers were chasing two vans at 1.25am on Friday when a 4WD rammed into their vehicle from behind, causing it to crash into a tree in Kampung Banggol Chicha near Pasir Mas. Anisah suffered from internal bleeding and was in semi-comatose state. She died the next day. On Malayan Trades Union Congress' proposal to reduce working hours to six hours daily from existing eight hours, Ali said no move would be made to cut down on the working hours for civil servants. Cuepacs was also reported to be against the idea, stating the proposal to reduce the working hours was impractical and might create unprecedented issues including a reduction in income and pension.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Wednesday Oktober 12 2016

3. Ten reports to be tabled in Dewan Rakyat, says PAC By Bernama

KUALA LUMPUR: The Public Accounts Committee will table 10 reports in the Dewan Rakyat at the Third Meeting, Fourth Session of the Thirteenth Parliamentary sitting. Two reports are on Smuggling and Misappropriation of Subsidised Diesel, and Certified Paddy Seeds Subsidy Programme (Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry). Two are on Advertisement/Billboard Licence Management in Kuala Lumpur, and Digital Broadcasting Content Development Project (Communications and Multimedia Ministry). One report is on Relocation of Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd's Train Operations from Tanjong Pagar to Woodlands, Singapore (Station) and Kempas Baru (Depot), Johor Baru (Transport Ministry). Two more are on Construction and Management of the Malaysian Armed Forces' Wisma Perwira in Jalan Padang Tembak, Kuala Lumpur (Defence Ministry), and 1BestariNet Service Management (Education Ministry). Another report is on Furniture Procurement Management in the Proposed Reconstruction of the General Operations Force 5th Battalion Camp in Simpang Renggam, Johor (Home Ministry). The remaining two are on Events Operation Management (Tourism and Culture Ministry), and 1Azam Programme Management (Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry and National Welfare Foundation). PAC chairman Datuk Hasan Arifin said the reports were finalised at the committee's meetings held in August, September and October this year. "The Parliamentary PAC is committed to ensuring that the people's money is spent judiciously with each government project providing the best value to the people," he said in a statement here today. He said PAC also wanted to ensure that each government project was entirely free of power abuse, misappropriation and wastage in the interest of the people, in line with its position as a parliamentary committee that is part of the country's lawmakers at the highest level. The 3rd meeting, 4th session of the 13th parliamentary sitting 2016 starts on Oct 17 and ends on Nov 24.—BERNAMA

4. Hospitals should be more worship-friendly, says Health DG

KUALA LUMPUR: Government and private hospitals must take the initiatives to apply worship-friendly concept to advice and counsel patients on prayers and religious matters. Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said there are currently 55 major hospitals nationwide, which is part of the "Ibadah (worship) Friendly Hospital" programme. Under this programme, religious officers would be placed at the respective hospitals to facilitate and help patients in the ward to do their worship. "There are 148 government hospitals and 290 private hospitals nationwide. Of these, 55 of them offer the programme. 60 religious officials have been seconded to the ministry to assist with this programme. "If possible, we want to expand the programme to all hospitals as part of our initiative to integrate spiritual aspect into treatment. "Even if some hospitals have no religious officials, the hospital staff should be able to carry out the necessary duties following the set criteria," he told reporters after delivering a speech at the Islamic Hospital Consortium of Malaysia 11th International Seminar & Workshop on "Ibadah Friendly Hospital" today. Dr Noor Hisham said since the programme is not mandatory, it is up to the respective hospital director to voluntarily implement the programme for the benefits of their patients. "This is also for non-Muslim patients. No, we are not creating temples or mosque in the hospitals, but we are merely providing a space and a conducive environment for them to carry out their prayers and religious practises," he said. This is so that patients can perform prayers or if need be to carry out funeral arrangements in accordance with their religion. "It is important to practice tolerance among the many religions. We don't only treat Muslims but also the non-Muslims. We need to know the do's and don'ts of other religions as well," he said. He added that religious officers can serve as reference point, offering counselling and advisory services, including procedures on claiming the remains of their loved ones. Dr Noor Hisham said the government also plans to extend the programme to clinics, offering "Clinic Mesra Ibadah" to cater to the larger public.

5. Sabah graft scandal: MACC detains 19 engineers, recovers RM2.4 million

KOTA KINABALU: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has nabbed 19 engineers to facilitate investigations into the Sabah Water Department's multi-million ringgit graft scandal.

An MACC source said the engineers were arrested at separate locations across the state during an operation carried out yesterday.

"Commission officers also recovered RM2.4 million from several of those arrested.

"They are believed to have amassed a sum of money from projects, and we have seized several documents for investigation," said the source.

The source added that the MACC will be issuing a press statement to provide details on the arrest.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the arrests, requesting all quarters not to politicise the matter.

Early this month, the MACC nabbed four people, including the Sabah Water Department director and his deputy, on suspicion of monopolising government projects, to rake in millions from RM3.3 billion worth of federal-funded projects to boost the clean water supply in Sabah.

The director was released from remand on Oct 16, and the remaining three were released on Monday.

The MACC also arrested the department's former deputy director on Oct 14, who was released from remand yesterday.

6. 2017 Budget: RM25 billion for health

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government has allocated RM25 billion for four healthcare programmes. The allocations are to build and upgrade new hospitals and clinics in Perlis, Kuching, Mukah, Jempol, Muar and Johor Baru. From the amount, RM536million was allocated to upgrade hospital facilities, including the provision of cardiology treatment equipment for Serdang Hospital, Penang Hospital and Sultanah Aminah Hospital in Johor Baru as well as to purchase 100 ambulances. The balance includes RM4.5 billion for the operations of 340 1Malaysia Clinics, 11 1Malaysia Mobile Clinics, 959

health clinics and more than 1,800 existing rural clinics. Another RM4 billion has been set aside for supply of drugs, consumables and vaccines to all government hospitals and health facilities. Meanwhile, government will introduce a grade 56 between grade 54 and Jusa C for medical and dental specialists. This is to address the issues of specialist doctors leaving the public service and delays in promotion. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said for the 2,600 doctors who were unable to undergo housemanship, they would serve on contract in government hospitals by December.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Friday Oktober 21 2016

7. 2017 Budget: Non-profit charitable hospitals to help reduce overcrowding in public hospital

KUALA LUMPUR: To reduce overcrowding in public hospitals, the government will cooperate with the private sector or non-governmental organisations to operate non-profit charitable hospitals based on government hospital rates. "The government will allocate RM 110 million, of which RM 70 million is for medical assistance, benefitting nearly 10,000 underprivileged patients," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said in his Budget speech today, adding that to encourage more private haemodialysis centres, one-off grants worth RM200,000 for purchasing of equipment with allocation of RM40 million has been allocated. Meanwhile, the National Community Health Empowerment Programme will be expanded involving an allocation of RM80 million.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Friday Oktober 21 2016

8. MACC: Corruption cases on the rise, those below 40 years of age more predisposed to taking bribes

PUTRAJAYA: Greed to live beyond one's means is the main reason individuals below the age of 40 accept bribes. Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) deputy chief commissioner Datuk Shamsun Baharin Mohd Jamil said the desire to compete, to show-off and to live luxuriously were among the reasons driving people into corruption. He said MACC have recorded 1,902 cases since 2013, of which those below 40 makes up 55 per cent or 1,045 of the total cases. Shamsun added that those in this age group are eager to be on par with their peers in wanting to have the latest gadgets and owning the latest car models and luxury goods. "This attitude will push them into taking every opportunity to commit corruption and accept bribes. "The number is very alarming and we must do something fast as they are the future leaders of the country," he told reporters earlier. Shamsun was met after an agreement ceremony between MACC and Astro Oasis to highlight the ills of corruption through Astro Oasis' Islamic programme "Pencetus Ummah". According to statistics

by MACC, 799 individuals from the 1,902 cases were civil servants, 795 from the general public, and 308 from other categories including the private sector. It also showed the number of individuals below the age of 40 involved in corruption has been growing since 2013. In 2013, there were 284 people (96 civil servants); in 2014, 309 (136 civil servants); and in 2015, 442 (206 civil servants) were caught for corruption. Shamsun said MACC have been closely monitoring civil servants who are living beyond their means in the last three years and will begin court proceedings to evaluate their earnings and assets. "The commission hopes to eradicate corruption activities among civil servants in the country in three years' time, and instil good values, high integrity and professionalism as it is important to ensure a good breed of leaders in the country," he added. He added MACC's initiative with Astro Oasis would help to bring about awareness on corruption through an Islamic approach through the nine-week programme scheduled to start on Oct 27.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Sunday Oktober 23 2016

9. Health Deputy Minister: Full Paying Patient scheme misunderstood, not affecting subsidy

IPOH: Health Deputy Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya today said many quarters have misunderstood the Full Paying Patient (FPP) term by claiming it will end subsidies for patient seeking treatment at government hospitals. He said FPP did not mean privatisation of healthcare services at government hospitals, but was implemented to provide an option for those who could afford to pay for their treatment. "If the patient feel they can afford a specialist, then they can pay in full for their treatment which is still lower than the private hospitals," he said. Dr Hilmi said the scheme would not affect existing benefits offered at government hospitals and clinics such as the RM1 registration fee and minimum RM30 of admission. "In fact, the government will allocate RM25 billion to Health Ministry next year, an increase of RM2 billion," he said, after officiating the Ministry's training institute's Allied Health Sciences College Sultan Azlan Shah convocation ceremony, here, today. The scheme, initiated in 2007, was to ensure retention of medical specialists in government hospital and provide them with extra income. On another matter, Dr Hilmi said he disagreed with the Penang Institute's findings that Malaysia should consider reviewing its 1.6 million civil servants. "I read the report this morning where it stated that 430,000 will be sufficient," he said, adding that it was unwise to reduce the number of civil servants because Malaysia still lacks doctors, paramedics and nurses.

10. Court adjourns Azmin's judicial review application to declassify 1MDB audit

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court today fixed Nov 18 for hearing of Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali's bid to declassify the Auditor-General's (AG) final report on 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), currently under the Official Secrets Act 1972 (OSA). Senior federal counsel Shamsul Bolhassan said he had just received documents on Monday and has yet to go through the papers. "We just received the documents from the applicant (Azmin) on Monday evening and will go through it after this," he said after the matter came up for case management in the chambers of judge Datuk Hanipah Farikullah today. The court has also fixed Nov 2 for case management before the hearing. In the judicial review application, Azmin had named Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang, and the Malaysian government as respondents. Azmin, who is also PKR deputy president, is seeking for a declaration from the court that Najib had acted in conflict of interest when he directed Ambrin to classify the report under the OSA. He also seeks a court declaration that the OSA classification of the report was unlawful and violated the Federal Constitution. Among others, Azmin who is also Gombak member of parliament seeks a court order to compel the three respondents to declassify the 1MDB final report and release it to the public. Azmin became the second person to file such judicial review application after former Tolak Individu Bernama Anwar Ibrahim (TIBAI) spiritual leader Muhammad Zahid Md Arip filed a legal bid to make the document available to the public.

11. IRB can meet RM115bil tax target, says Finance Ministry

KUALA LUMPUR: The Finance Ministry (MoF) is confident that the Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia (IRB) can meet its direct tax collection target of RM115 billion for 2016 despite the uncertain economic conditions. Second Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong said the figure represents a review by his ministry following the fall in global oil prices and the foreign exchange rate as well a change in taxation policy. "Up to September 30 this year, the IRB collected direct taxes of about RM84.028 billion. "This is 73.07 per cent of the ministry's target for the year of RM115 billion," he told reporters after officiating the National Taxation Seminar 2016 here today. Earlier in his speech, Lee said through the 2017 Budget, the government would continue its current fiscal policy and ensure it stays on track and expands, alongside initiatives to enhance the contribution of the private sector. Meanwhile, IRB Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Dr Mohd Shukor Mahfar said apart from the decline in global oil prices, another factor impacting the lower collection of taxes in 2016, compared to RM121.236 billion in 2015, is the introduction of the Goods

and Services tax (GST) on April 1, 2015. "When the GST was introduced, the government also reduced the income tax rate to compensate for the GST. "We project that when the GST has stabilised and economic conditions improve, the tax collection will rise," he added. Meanwhile, the one-day tax seminar will be held simultaneously at 23 locations nationwide in an effort to improve the understanding of taxation in the community.—BERNAMA

NEW STRAITS TIMES Monday Oktober 31 2016

12. Hospitals over 50 years old nationwide to undergo safety audits

PUTRAJAYA: Forty eight aging hospital buildings nationwide will go through extensive auditing in the near future to ensure that they comply with safety requirements. Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said hospital blocks that are more than 50 years old will be audited in terms of safety and maintenance. "Most of the old hospitals were built during British rule and might not meet current safety standards. These buildings are still strong, but we want to check the safety in other aspects. "The new buildings are required to comply with the Uniform Building by-law, which was only introduced in 1984. And then there was the Fire Service Act 1988 which they need to adhere to. "(But) the old hospitals were built way before that. For instance, Batu Gajah Hospital in Perak is 136 years old, Balik Pulau Hospital in Penang is 130 years old and Hospital Tuanku Fauziah in Perlis is 97 years old. "Thus, we need collaboration between the Works Department and Fire and Rescue Department, as well as other relevant agencies to conduct inspection on these buildings so that the safety of the hospitals can be established," he told reporters at a press conference here today. Subramaniam said this in the wake of the fire incident in the intensive care unit of Hospital Sultanah Aminah (HSA) in Johor, which claimed six lives on Tuesday. He added that the cabinet has also agreed that the Works Department, Fire and Rescue Department and other relevant agencies will provide the necessary technical expertise and advice in reviewing safety guidelines required to prevent similar accidents from recurring. Subramaniam said in extreme cases, old hospital buildings might be torn down. "If the hospital building is in a dilapidated state, then it has to be demolished," he said. On the cause of the fire at HSA, Subramaniam said the ministry expects to receive the report from the Fire and Rescue Department in one or two weeks. "We have yet to determine the cause of the fire. Once we have the report, we will bring the matter to the cabinet," he said.

13. MACC, NAD, to work as team to combat corruption, abuse of power

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the National Audit Department (NAD) will continue to strengthen their working relationship to ensure that operations by both agencies run smoothly. MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said the partnership includes addressing corruption and abuse of power in the country as a team, which would indirectly help strengthen public confidence in both agencies. "The MACC has a strong working relationship with the NAD. (For instance) we have signed a memorandum of understanding on the exchange of officers between our two organisations. "With this cooperation, we hope to boost the effectiveness of our operations in facing all kind of challenges and constraints," he said in a statement today. Dzulkifli said this in conjunction with a courtesy call made by the NAD here. The visitors comprised eight NAD officers, led by its Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang, who was joined by Deputy Auditor-General (performance) Datuk Mustafa Saman, Deputy Auditor-General (governance) Datuk Che Isa Che Kob, and Social and Performance Audit Sector Security division director Datuk Juhari Haron. Also present were First Finance Audit Sector director Khalid Khan Abdullah Khan, First Governance Audit Sector division director Datin Ang Nai Har, Audit Follow-up division director Zulkipli Abdullah, and Audit Chief Assistant Director William Yapp. Representing the MACC were deputy chief commissioner (operation) Datuk Azam Baki and deputy chief commissioner (prevention) Datuk Shamshun Baharin Mohd. Jamil.