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Goldman Sachs to pay only US\$1.7b

GOLDMAN Sachs agreed to pay only US\$1.7 billion or 23.3 per cent of the US\$7.5 billion demanded by the previous Pakatan Harapan administration to settle outstanding charges and claims related to the three bond transactions that the global investment bank arranged for 1Malaysia Development Bhd. This was revealed by Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz in his winding-up speech on the debate on the allocation set aside for his ministry under the 2021 Budget.

New Straits Times Paper | 2 Disember 2020 | Page: 7

Lawyer claims trial to duping client of RM67,000

SHAH ALAM: A lawyer was charged at the Sessions Court here yesterday with four counts of duping his client of RM67,000 over an investigation into the misappropriation of funds from the Skills Development Fund Corporation.

P. Nagarajan, 52, pleaded not guilty to the offences before judge Rozilah Salleh.

According to the charge sheet, the accused was alleged to have deceived S. Bala Krishnan into believing that he could help the victim to avoid being arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in relation to the misappropriation of the corporation's funds.

This had led the victim to give the accused a total of RM67,000 via cheques and through the Malaysian Electronic Payment System transfers into the account of law firm Messrs Nagarajan Peri & Co on four occasions.

The offences were allegedly committed at various banks and parking lots in Kajang between Sept 18, 2017 and Nov 1 the same year.

The charges under Section 420 of the Penal Code carries a maximum of 10 years' jail, whipping

and fine, if convicted.

Earlier, MACC deputy public prosecutor Zander Lim Wai Keong offered RM50,000 bail to the accused.

However, the accused's counsel, R. Vikram, pleaded for a lower bail, saying his client's law firm was badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"His sole income is what is earned by the firm and RM50,000 is a high amount. We plead for a lower sum of RM20,000 for all the charges," he said.

Meanwhile, the accused also told the court that he did not have a bad record at the Bar Council and had given his full cooperation to the MACC throughout the investigation.

"I cannot afford to make RM50,000 bail as I have many payments to make, including the salary of my staff. I came to court on my own today (yesterday) as I have an obligation to clear my name. I plead for the bail amount to be reduced," he said.

The judge then allowed Nagarajan RM50,000 bail in one surety and ordered him to surrender his passport to the court until the disposal of the case.

His case will be up for mention on Jan 22.



P. Nagarajan

5 FROM FINANCE MINISTRY CHARGED WITH FAILING TO REPORT BRIBES >> PAGE 10

FIRST IN COUNTRY TO BE CHARGED

FIVE FINED FOR FAILING TO REPORT BRIBES

Finance Ministry officers fined between RM1,500 and RM2,000, three months' jail in default

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FIVE Finance Ministry officers became the first group in the country to be charged with failing to report bribes to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). The five — Nurul Ashikin Zulkiflee, 33; Azad Fadhmi Abdul Rah-

man, 34; Siti Nurkhairunnisa Adnan, 32; Mohd Fairus Hussin, 38; and Madiyana Mamat, 39 — pleaded guilty to the offence at the Sessions Court here yesterday.

Judge Manira Mohd Noor handed fines of between RM1,500 and RM2,000 and in default three months' jail against the accused under Section 25(1) of the MACC Act 2009.

Section 25(1) of the act stipulates that anyone who is offered or given gratification shall report the action, and if available, name the person who gave or made the offer to the police or MACC.

It carries a fine of up to RM100,000 or a maximum jail sentence of 10 years, or both.

According to the charge sheets, the accused were alleged-

ly offered graft of between RM200 and RM600 to facilitate a process to give approvals to five companies to obtain Bumiputera status.

Nurul Ashikin and Azad Fadhmi, who worked as an administrative assistant (Finance) and assistant accountant, respectively, were each fined RM1,500.

Two other assistant accountants, Siti Nurkhairunnisa, Madiyana Mamat and Mohd Fairus, who was an administrative assistant, were each fined RM2,000.

They allegedly committed the

offence at the company registration unit, Finance Ministry procurement division in Putrajaya between May 2018 and June this year.

Earlier, deputy public prosecutor Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin asked the court to hand deterrent sentences against the accused.

"MACC cannot work alone to combat corruption in this country without public cooperation. The accused should report to the graft buster when they were offered bribes," he said.

However, counsel Mohd Shahrullah Khan Nawab Zadah

Khan and Muhamad Aizat Fakri, who represented the accused, pleaded for a minimum sentence.

"We ask for a fine not exceeding our clients' monthly emolument, as they could lose their jobs."

"They need to support their families and also are remorseful of their wrongdoing."

The five were among nine individuals nabbed by the MACC believed to be involved in a syndicate to approve applications of new accounts with the Finance Ministry as well as applications for Bumiputera status.



The five Finance Ministry officers arriving at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court yesterday. PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH

New Straits Times Paper | 4 Disember 2020 | Page: 10

MACC arrests businessman for trying to bribe cop

JOHOR BARU: A businessman was arrested by the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) on Wednesday night for trying to bribe a police officer. MACC said investigations showed that the suspect tried to bribe the officer with RM45,000 as an inducement to release his friends, who were detained during a raid at a nightclub in Ulu Tiram here. "The suspect, 47, offered the bribe so his friends would not have to undergo urine tests and have action taken under Article 10 of the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988," MACC said in a statement. The suspect was arrested about 10.30pm on Wednesday at the Johor MACC office. "The case is being investigated under Section 17(b) of the MACC Act 2009 and the suspect has been remanded for five days beginning today (yesterday)." Johor MACC director Datuk Azmi Alias confirmed the arrest and informed that the remand order was issued by registrar Hidayah Abdul Manaf at the Magistrate's Court here.

New Straits Times Paper | 8 Disember 2020 | Page: 1 & 6



DISCHARGE NOT AMOUNTING TO ACQUITTAL

NO FULL ACQUITTAL FOR KU NAN

Judge rejects lawyer's arguments that former minister should be given full discharge

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FORMER Federal Territories minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor was yesterday given a discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) in his RMI million corruption case.

High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali, in granting the DNAA, rejected the Umno politician's arguments that he should be given a full acquittal, similar to how DAP secretary-general and former finance minister Lim Guan Eng had been freed of corruption charges midway through his trial in 2018.

Nazlan said there were merits in the prosecution's application not to grant Tengku Adnan, 69, a full acquittal as further investigations were needed involving the case.

At the onset of the resumption of the trial yesterday morning, deputy public prosecutor Julia Ibrahim informed the judge that she had received instructions from the Attorney-General's Chambers (A-GC) to seek a DNAA for Tengku Adnan.

She said there had been new developments in the case involving a witness, which warranted further investigation and this left the prosecution with no choice but to apply for the DNAA.

"We don't want to waste the court's time as we don't know how long the investigation may take. That is why we received instructions to drop proceedings at this stage."

"Whether we will continue with the charge, file new charges or drop this case altogether will depend on the outcome of the investigation," she said, pointing out that only two witnesses had testified in the trial, which started on Sept 20 last year.

Nazlan said in view of the reasons submitted by the DPP the court found it justified not to grant Tengku Adnan a full acquittal.

"I, therefore, order the accused to be discharged not amounting to an acquittal," he ruled.

Earlier, Tengku Adnan's lawyer, Tan Hock Chuan, vehemently argued that his client should be granted a full acquittal as it wouldn't be fair for the charge to be left hanging over his head indefinitely.

Tan said Tengku Adnan was first charged in the Sessions Court on Nov 15, 2018 and the charge had been hanging over his head for more than two years.

"The prosecution is now saying they need more time to investigate and they cannot even indicate how long it will take," he said, before going on to cite previous trials, including that of

Lim, where the court had granted a full discharge even though the prosecution had applied only for DNAA.

It was previously reported that Lim and businesswoman Phang Li Koon were granted a full discharge from their corruption charges by Penang High Court judge Datuk Hadhariah Syed Ismail even though the prosecution had applied only for a DNAA.

Lim had then claimed trial to using his position as a public officer, namely as the then Penang chief minister, to gain gratification for himself and his wife, Betty Chew Gek Cheng.

He was accused of doing so by approving the application for conversion of agriculture land to a public housing zone in the southwest district to a company, Magnificent Emblem Sdn Bhd.

Tengku Adnan, meanwhile, was charged with receiving RMI million from businessman Tan Eng Boon to approve an application by Nucleus Properties Sdn Bhd (now known as Paragon City Development Sdn Bhd) to increase the industrial plot ratio of a piece of land in Jalan Semarak.

The offence was said to have taken place at the Putra World Trade Centre CIMB branch on Dec 27, 2013.

The charge against Tengku Adnan was under Section 24(1) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act.

If convicted, he could have been jailed up to 20 years and fined five times the grat-



Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor at the Kuala Lumpur Courts Complex yesterday. PIC BY ROHANIS SHUKRI

ification amount.

Previously, the court fined Tan Eng Boon RMI5 million over an alternative charge of abetting

Tengku Adnan under Section 165 of the Penal Code, which carries a two-year jail term, a fine or both upon conviction.

New Straits Times Paper | 9 Disember 2020 | Page: 10

343 REPORTS IN 8 YEARS

Many civil servants not brave enough to report graft, says MACC

PUTRAJAYA: Only 0.01 per cent of the 1.6 million civil servants are brave enough to report corrupt practices in their departments and agencies, said Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Deputy Chief Commissioner (Prevention) Datuk Seri Shamshun Baharin Mohd Jamil.

He said the figure was low, despite the incentives provided to them.

Based on MACC's data, he said, only 343 civil servants provided information on corrupt practices between 2012 and last year.

"Civil servants have to understand that it is an offence for them to accept bribes. They should lodge a report if they are

offered a bribe so that action can be taken.

"By doing so, they (civil servants) can prevent those who have to deal with civil servants from requesting for favours and privileges, like getting approval for an application without going through the proper procedures.

"We want this to be a culture among civil servants, that is, to lodge reports on corrupt practices, as this will eliminate corruption and abuse of power in the civil service," he told



Datuk Seri
Shamshun Baharin
Mohd Jamil

Bernama in an exclusive interview at the MACC office here recently.

Shamshun Baharin cited a letter issued by the Office of the Chief Secretary to the government in 2011 on guidelines for recognition of civil servants who reported bribery cases. It stated that civil servants who do so would receive the same amount of the bribe offered as an incentive.

He said MACC disbursed about RM600,000 in incentives to 343

civil servants until the end of last year for lodging reports on corruption in their departments and agencies.

He said it was the duty of civil servants to report bribery transactions and those who failed to do so could face action under Section 25 of the MACC Act 2009, which provides for a fine of up to RM100,000 or imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or both if found guilty.

He said in the first case where the law was applied, five employees of the Finance Ministry were fined between RM1,500 and RM2,000 by the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court on Dec 2.

"Failure to report bribery trans-

actions is also subject to action as there is such a law and this is to open the eyes of civil servants and the public to be more sensitive and to come forward to report corruption cases happening around them."

He said departments and agencies need to play their role by providing support and protection to staff or officers who reported corruption cases to build a corruption-free society.

He gave the assurance that MACC would protect those who provided information on corruption under the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010 and the Witness Protection Act 2009. **Bernama**

New Straits Times Paper | 9 Disember 2020 | Page: 11

Vietnamese woman held over RM29,000 bribe to cop

JOHOR BARU: A Vietnamese woman was detained by the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) today for bribing a police officer. Investigations revealed that the suspect, 25, gave a RM29,600 bribe to a police officer with the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police. The amount was as an inducement to release her friend who was detained for possessing contraband liquor, an offence under Section 135(1)(d) of the Customs Act 1962. "The suspect was arrested at the Johor MACC office this morning (yesterday) to help in the investigation," MACC said in a statement. The case is being investigated under Section 17(b) of the MACC Act 2009. Johor MACC director Datuk Azmi Alias confirmed the arrest.

New Straits Times Paper | 10 Disember 2020 | Page: 7

IMMIGRATION OFFICER GETS JAIL, FINE

Judge: Those who bribe and accept bribes will burn in hell

SHAH ALAM: An Immigration officer, who admitted to taking a RM12,000 bribe to speed up the remand process of two China national detainees, was reprimanded by a Sessions Court judge before being sentenced to 30 days in jail.

The officer was also fined RM20,000.

"People who bribe others and accept bribes will burn in hell, always remember this. This is also a reminder for myself and also everyone else in this court," said judge Rozilah Salleh.

She handed down the sentence to Zalizi Ismail, 26, after the accused pleaded guilty to committing the offence.

Rozilah also reprimanded Zalizi for failing to carry out his duty fairly and for failing to uphold the trust given to him by the Immi-

gration Department to monitor the entry points into the country.

She said instead of fulfilling his responsibilities, Zalizi had released foreign detainees at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang.

"I believe that with this guilty plea, you would be punished in this world and I pray that this would be a *kifarah* (compensation) for you in the hereafter.

"Some people were caught many times, but still did not admit to the offence although there is evidence against them."

When the proceedings ended, Zalizi wept while being consoled by his family members, who were present in the courtroom.

He earlier pleaded guilty to accepting RM12,000 in his capacity as an Immigration officer from one Chu Wing Kong.

Zalizi had committed the offence in his capacity as the assistant investigating officer at the Immigration Department (Operations Division) in KLIA.

The bribe was purportedly for the purpose of expediting the process of the remand of two China nationals, namely Zhou Guifang and Zhu Xiangliang, and release them to return to China.

He committed the offence at a petrol station café in KLIA 2, Jalan Terminal KLIA, in Sepang, Selangor at about 7.37pm on Dec 2.

The offence under Section 165 of the Penal Code carries a maximum jail term of two years or a fine or both, if convicted.

Based on the facts of the case, both the China nationals were detained during an Immigration inspection at the Departure Hall on the fourth floor of the MTB KLIA

building on Nov 29, after being suspected of overstaying in the country.

They were subsequently remanded for 14 days until Dec 12.

The accused had then contacted Chu and asked for RM12,000, to speed up the process to release the two foreign nationals so that they could return to their country in two weeks' time.

In pleading for leniency, the unrepresented accused said he had repented and regretted all his wrongdoings.

He pleaded for only a fine to be imposed on him.

"I plead that the court would not send me to jail as I have a year-old child and my wife to care for.

"I am also looking after my father and two siblings, who are still studying.

"This is my first offence and I plead for the court to give me a fine. My starting salary is RM1,460," he said.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy public prosecutor Fadli Ab Wahab urged for a deterrent sentence, saying that the public's interest needed to be considered in sentencing due to the serious nature of the offence committed by the accused.

Fadli said having less than two years of service with the Immigration Department, Zalizi was already involved in corruption, which involved a huge amount of money.

"The accused should be jailed as a reminder for others not to commit such offences."

The court then ordered the accused to serve four months' jail if he failed to pay the fine.

New Straits Times Paper | 12 Disember 2020 | Page: 11

MEMORANDUM TO MACC

PROBE MEAT CARTEL, MACC URGED

Two NGOs call on anti-graft agency to investigate racket that used fake halal labels on smuggled meat

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TWO non-governmental organisations (NGOs) yesterday urged the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to conduct a thorough investigation in-

to a "meat cartel" that smuggled uncertified frozen meat and sold it to the market by using fake halal labels.

Gabungan Baru Harapan Malaysia president Mohd Zulfitri Mohd Basir and Pertubuhan Kebajikan Anak Bersatu Selangor president Rahmadin Alimuddin, representing the NGOs, handed over a memorandum on their demands to the anti-graft agency yesterday.

The NGOs had listed 11 demands in the memorandum.

They include a call that the identity of the cartel be revealed; to reveal the brand used by the cartel; to investigate how the unauthorised meat was allowed to enter the country; why meat

that had been distributed to the market was not withdrawn; and why no other similar raids had been conducted in other states.

"This is not the first time such cases have happened in the country, but not a single person has been arrested over the years.

"The import of meat involves not only one ministry but also other agencies, hence we believe MACC is the right agency to investigate what has gone wrong in the process," Zulfitri said at the MACC headquarters here.

He said the NGOs would wait for feedback from MACC before taking their next course of action.

"If no action is taken, it means that something is amiss.



Gagasan Baharu Harapan Malaysia president Mohd Zulfitri Mohd Basir (right) showing the memorandum submitted to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC BY LUQMAN HAKIM ZUBIR

"But we will wait for the feedback first."

On Dec 1, in a joint operation, authorities crippled a "meat cartel" that smuggled uncertified frozen meat from Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine and China.

A total of 1,500 tonnes of frozen meat with an estimated value of RM30 million was seized during

the raid at a warehouse in the Senai Industrial Park in Johor.

The products were said to have been smuggled through Johor's main seaports, while the warehouse is believed to be where the smugglers generated fake labels and stamps, which would be used on the repackaged meat and sold nationwide.

New Straits Times Paper | 12 Disember 2020 | Page: 10

RM1.25B SOLAR HYBRID PROJECT

PROSECUTION WRAPS UP CASE

Submissions by both sides by Feb 10, after which decision will be made on whether Rosmah needs to enter her defence

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THE prosecution yesterday wrapped up its case against Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor in the trial where she is accused of receiving bribes in exchange for helping a company secure a RM1.25 billion project.

Lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram, who was assisted by deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Akram Abdul Gharib, informed High Court judge Mo-

hamed Zaini Mazlan that the prosecution wanted to close its case after the defence finished with its cross-examination of a witness yesterday morning.

Former education minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, who was recalled to be cross-examined by Rosmah's lawyers, finished testifying just before noon.

Mahdzir, who had constantly frustrated Rosmah's lawyers with his answers, either in denying knowledge of events or stating that he had forgotten what had transpired, again had the defence on tenterhooks with his replies.

When Mahdzir repeatedly gave the same answers again yesterday, Rosmah's exasperated counsel, Datuk Jagjit Singh, shot out that the lapse in the former's memory must have been caused by the Covid-19 virus.

Mahdzir, who remained un-

fazed by Jagjit's remarks, in an equally sarcastic tone, replied, "Yes, it must be."

JAGJIT: "You are lying in this court. You are practising selective memory... even my 5-year-old grandson will be able to tell."

MAHDZIR: "You don't have to bring your grandson into all this. This is not Parliament, where you can say anything you want."

JAGJIT: "I wish I was in Parliament."

Mahdzir was further put under the hammer by Rosmah's other counsel, Datuk Akberdin Abdul

Kader, who accused the Umno politician of lacking credibility and integrity to be a witness in the trial.

However, Mahdzir, who is now Tenaga Nasional Berhad chairman, said he disagreed with such an opinion.

Meanwhile, Zaini yesterday ruled that he would not allow an audio recording of a conversation between Rosmah and her husband, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, to be tendered as an exhibit in the trial.

He later fixed Dec 28 for the defence to file its written submissions, Jan 4 for the prosecution to respond and Jan 29 for the defence to reply.

He also fixed Feb 10 for the final clarification of the submissions before another date is fixed for a

decision on whether Rosmah should be called to enter her defence.

Rosmah is on trial for soliciting RM187.5 million and two counts of receiving bribes totalling RM6.5 million from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd former managing director Saidi Abang Sam-suddin.

The bribes were allegedly to help Jepak Holdings secure the RM1.25-billion solar hybrid project for 369 schools in the interior of Sarawak.

Rosmah, 69, is accused of committing the offences between January 2016 and September 2017.

She faces a maximum 20-year jail term and a fine of not less than five times the amount of the gratification if convicted.



Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor arriving at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.



New Straits Times Paper | 12 Disember 2020 | Page: 3

FREING FOREIGNERS

Immigration man claims trial to 17 bribery charges

KUALA LUMPUR: An Immigration Department officer was yesterday slapped with 17 counts of receiving RM21,500 in bribes to free foreign nationals who had committed immigration-related offences.

Mohd Al-Ridhuan Ahmad Zaini, 35, who was arrested during a Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) operation called Op Selat, claimed trial to all the charges before Sessions Court judge Rozina Ayob.

He was accused of accepting the money through 17 transactions from one Nur Amanina Adnan from Maybank and CIMB accounts into a Muamalat Bank account belonging to Entiti Maju Enterprise, a company owned by the accused's wife, Nurul Natasha Andrew.

The bribe was allegedly obtained for himself in exchange for the release of foreign nationals who had committed offences under the Immigration Act.

He was accused of allowing the foreigners to leave the country through klia2 without taking legal action against them.

He allegedly committed the offences in Jalan Tasik Utama 7, Medan Niaga Tasik Damai, here, between July 25 and Nov 11.

If convicted of the charges framed under Section 24(1) of



Immigration Department officer Mohd Al-Ridhuan Ahmad Zaini (centre) at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court yesterday. PIX BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

the MACC Act, Al-Ridhuan faces up to 20 years' jail and a fine of five times the value of the offence committed, or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

Deputy public prosecutor Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin sought for RM80,000 bail to be imposed on the accused, saying that the charges were serious.

"The manner in which the accused committed the offences as

portrayed in the charges against him is the way of a traitor of the country."

Al-Ridhuan's lawyer, Harcharanjit Singh, pleaded for a reasonable bail amount, saying that his client had fully cooperated with the anti-graft agency since the investigations started.

"My client came to court voluntarily today (yesterday) once he received a call that he would

be charged.

"He has three children aged 2 to 7 and his wife has a serious medical condition. She is receiving treatment at a hospital," he said, adding that RM10,000 was a reasonable bail for his client.

The judge allowed RM30,000 bail in one surety and ordered the accused to surrender his passport to the court.

Al-Ridhuan was also ordered to report to the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya on the first week of each month until the disposal of the case.

The court also prohibited the accused from going near or disturbing witnesses of the case.

"If there is any official report lodged against you with regard to this case, your bail money will be forfeited," the judge said.

The case will be up for mention on Jan 21.

It was reported that 65 individuals, comprising 39 Immigration officers, 17 agents and nine civilians, were arrested since Op Selat began earlier this year.

Op Selat was conducted with the assistance of the Immigration Department based on intelligence and surveillance at the country's entry and exit points, especially at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, klia2 and the Sultan Iskandar Building.

New Straits Times Paper | 12 Disember 2020 | Page: 1

COVID-19 CASES **TOTAL** 80,309 (UP TO DECEMBER 11) **NEW** 1,810 **RECOVERED** 67,173 **DEATHS** 402

NEW ESTABLISHED 1845
STRAITS TIMES

PP413/09/2012 (030687) | DECEMBER 12, 2020 | SATURDAY | RM2.00

GRAFT VIRUS

GOING by the number of cases recently, it appears the nation is afflicted with another dangerous disease. It's not just Covid-19 that needs a cure. Just yesterday alone, there were several arrests and charges related to corruption.

- Two senior govt officers, including a deputy D-G, detained by MACC for involvement in a shipping graft scandal
- Immigration officer charged with receiving bribes to free offenders
- Pakistani jailed and fined for bribing an Immigration officer to release group of foreign nationals

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BERNAMA PIC

New Straits Times Paper | 12 Disember 2020 | Page: 2 & 3



The five individuals at the Putrajaya magistrate's court yesterday after they were arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission. PIC BY LUQMAN HAKIM ZUBIR

ABUSE OF POWER

5 HELD OVER SHIPPING GRAFT SCANDAL

Deputy D-G, secretary of govt dept and
3 company directors arrested by MACC

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THE Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) detained five people, including a department deputy director-general,

over a graft scandal related to the approval and special exemption granted to several companies shipping heavy grade oil (HGO) in Malaysian waters.

Also detained were a department secretary and three directors of shipping companies.

The five, aged between 35 to 54,

were arrested at the MACC headquarters here yesterday when they arrived to give their statements.

Sources close to the investigation said the two senior government officers were found to have abused their power by issuing exemption letters to companies without the knowledge and approval of the transport minister.

"The director-general of the particular department was not even aware of the exemption letter. This is because the director-general

had issued an order to bar the use of single hull, double bottom (vessels) to ship HGO in Malaysian waters," the source said.

The source said numerous complaints had been received from shipping operators who had shifted to double hull, double bottom vessels.

"This is in line with international standards to prevent leakages and pollution in the event of oil spills by single hull vessels."

The five suspects were produced at the Putrajaya magistrate's court for remand under Section 117 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The case is being investigated under Section 17 of the MACC Act 2009.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya, when contacted, confirmed the arrests, but declined to elaborate on the case.

New Straits Times Paper | 12 Disember 2020 | Page: 3

Foreigner jailed 30 days, fined for bribing Immigration officer

KUALA LUMPUR: A Pakistani was sentenced to 30 days' jail and fined RM10,000 by the Sessions Court for bribing an Immigration officer with RM12,500 to release 20 of his countrymen and a Bangladeshi to leave the country.

The sentence was handed down to Muhammad Irfan, 34, after he pleaded guilty to the offence yesterday.

Judge Rozina Ayob ordered the accused to serve another 30 days' jail if he failed to pay the fine.

Irfan had earlier admitted to giving the money to Muhamad Faizal Ahmad, an Immigration Department officer attached to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport entry point control unit.

Irfan was accused of bribing Faizal, who was an agent of the government, in exchange for the release of 20 of his countrymen and a Bangladeshi man.

The bribe was to enable the foreigners to return to their respective countries without any legal action being taken against them.

Irfan committed the offence in front of a restaurant in Putrajaya between 3.25pm and 3.32pm on Nov 16.

The offence under Section 214 of the Penal Code carries up to 10 years' jail or a fine or both if convicted.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy public prosecutor Mahadi Abdul Jumaat urged for a deterrent sentence, saying that public interest needed to be considered by the court in sentencing.

"The accused was lucky to have been offered an alternative charge, but public interest needs to be considered.

"The case involves national security as the accused had dared put himself on the line for the process of the release of the 21 foreigners who had overstayed in the country.

"The court should impose a jail term and a fine that reflects the seriousness of the offence committed by the accused," he said.



Muhammad Irfan at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court yesterday.

Pleading for leniency, Irfan, a father of four, who was unrepresented, said he was the sole breadwinner of his family and his wife had just given birth two days ago.

"I plead for a lenient sentence. My baby was born two days ago and I still have not had the chance to settle my child's birth matters."

Meanwhile, in a different court, Bangladeshi Ahmmed Md Rana, 37, who was detained in the same operation as Irfan, was charged with bribing the same Immigration officer with RM8,500 for the purpose of releasing eight of his

countrymen to return to their country without any legal action being taken against them.

He was accused of committing the offence at the same place between 6.10pm and 6.15pm on Nov 16.

No plea was recorded as the accused did not understand the charge that was read to him in Bahasa Melayu.

Judge Azura Alwi set Monday for mention and for an interpreter to read the charge to the accused in his native language.

She allowed RM20,000 bail in one surety, pending mention.

New Straits Times Paper | 15 Disember 2020 | Page: 9

BRIBERY OFFENCES

4 IMMIGRATION MEN CHARGED WITH GRAFT

They were charged separately in three states over a slew of corruption offences

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A NUMBER of Immigration Department officers were hauled to separate courts nationwide yesterday for a slew of corruption offences, including accepting bribes.

In **Kota Baru**, Kelantan, two Immigration officers based at the Johor Immigration Department were charged at the Kota Baru Sessions Court with 33 counts of bribery involving RM154,340 between April 2018 and November last year.

The accused, Mohamad Hariss Rosli, 27, was alleged to have accepted RM152,940 in bribes from 2018 to last year.

He pleaded guilty to 18 out of the 31 charges and pleaded not guilty to the subsequent charges (from 19 to 31), for which he claimed trial.

The second accused, Fasmawi Ab Wahab, 24, pleaded guilty to two counts of graft amounting to RM1,400.

All charges were read out before judge Zaman Mohd Noor.

The accused were charged under Section 165 of the Penal Code which carries a jail term of up to



Mohamad Hariss Rosli



Fasmawi Ab Wahab



Akashah Roslan



Baliyan Mohd Bhanudin

two years or a fine, or both, upon conviction.

Deputy public prosecutor Norhamizah Ghazali prosecuted the case. The accused were not represented.

The court set Dec 22 for sentencing.

In **George Town**, Penang, an Immigration officer, who was detained recently for causing a serious breach at the country's borders, pleaded guilty at the Sessions Court to three counts of receiving cash totalling RM3,060 from a Mohd Azril Aziz.

Judge Norhayati Mohamad Yunus sentenced Akashah Roslan, 38, to 30 days' jail and RM4,000 fine for each of the offences.

"The court finds the accused guilty and he is convicted of the offence. As such, this court sentences the accused to 30 days' jail and RM4,000 fine for each of

fence, in default four months' jail. The sentence will run concurrently," she said.

Altogether, Akashah would serve 30 days' jail beginning yesterday and a RM12,000 fine.

The three charges fall under Section 165 of the Penal Code, which makes it an offence for a public servant to obtain a valuable thing, such as land or money, without adequate or any consideration, from somebody involved in a proceeding or business related to his (public servant's) official function.

Akashah had stamped the Immigration Department chop on passports of foreign workers without their presence to enable them to remain in the country.

He had worked with a middleman, who provided him with the passports of the foreigners at several mamak restaurants around

Johor, before returning them back to the middleman at the same restaurants.

The middleman would then make payments into Akashah's CIMB accounts online after each task.

Both the middleman and Azril met while working in the Foreign Workers Division in 2012. However, Akashah only started committing the offences in 2018.

In **Shah Alam**, Selangor, an Immigration officer was charged with four counts of receiving RM7,120 in bribes from two individuals since September last year.

Baliyan Mohd Bhanudin, however, pleaded not guilty when the charges were read to him before Sessions Court judge Rozilah Salleh yesterday.

The 32-year-old officer also claimed trial to four alternative charges of misusing entry and ex-

it stamps at Malaysian borders.

Baliyan, who worked at the Sultan Iskandar Immigration Department office in Johor Baru, was accused of receiving RM7,120 from two individuals aged 29 and 44 respectively.

The offence falls under Section 165 of the Penal Code which carries two years' jail or fine or both upon conviction.

For the alternative charges, he was accused of receiving bribes of the same amount from the same persons.

The father of three was charged under Section 25(2) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009.

The court set RM50,000 bail for all charges and ordered the accused to surrender his passport.

The court also fixed Jan 18 for mention. **Additional reporting by Sharifah Mahsinah Abdullah**

New Straits Times Paper | 17 Disember 2020 | Page: 14

Policewoman claims trial to bribery charges

KOTA KINABALU: A policewoman with the rank of sergeant claimed trial at the Sessions Court here to two counts of soliciting bribe as inducement not to continue the investigation on a man arrested for theft early this year. Bernama reported that Nora Alun, 42, from the Kota Kinabalu police headquarters, pleaded not guilty when the charges were read before judge Abu Bakar Manat. In the first charge, she is said to have accepted RM3,000 from Mohd Saiful Jamil on Feb 13 to discontinue a probe against him. In the second charge, she is said to have accepted RM3,000 from the same person at the Criminal Investigation Department office of Kota Kinabalu police station on Feb 17. The court allowed bail of RM10,000 in one surety. The case mention is set for Jan 19.

New Straits Times Paper | 18 Disember 2020 | Page: 11



The four men, who have been remanded for six days, leaving the Putrajaya magistrate's court yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

TRAP SET AT HOTEL

4 held for posing as MACC officers, soliciting bribe

PUTRAJAYA: Four people, including a company owner and director, were nabbed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for impersonating the agency's officers and soliciting a RM60,000 bribe to "settle" a case that it was probing.

Three of the men, aged between 39 and 54, were detained in a trap set at a hotel here about 4.30pm on Wednesday.

The mastermind, known as "Datuk Roy", had disguised himself as a MACC director.

The fourth person was picked up at his house in Melaka at 8.30pm.

All four were produced for remand at the Putrajaya magistrate's court here yesterday under Section 117 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Magistrate Shah Wira Abdul Rahim granted a six-day remand, beginning yesterday until Dec 22.

Sources said the four men, who had posed as senior officers from MACC and deputy public prosecutors, had solicited bribes to change the charges against the complainant to a lighter offence and re-open his bank account, said to have been frozen by the graft busters.

"The group members were even willing to walk into the MACC headquarters to have their photos taken to convince the complainant that they were MACC officers."

"All their movements were recorded by the closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at the MACC headquarters."

The source said MACC was tracking down a woman, a member of the group, to help in the probe.

When contacted, MACC Intelligence Division director Datuk Azmi Kamaruzaman confirmed the arrests.

New Straits Times Paper | 19 Disember 2020 | Page: 9



MONEY LAUNDERING

Judge suggests case be heard before another judge

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court judge presiding over Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's money-laundering and tax evasion cases involving RM7,097,750 has suggested that the trial be transferred before another judge to enable it to be heard earlier.

Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan made the suggestion when deputy public prosecutor (DPP) Poh Yih Tinn updated the court about Rosmah's corruption case involving the solar hybrid project for rural schools in Sarawak, which is fixed for oral submissions on Feb 10 next year. The prosecution wrapped up the case on Dec 11.

Zaini, who is presiding over both cases, initially decided to start Rosmah's money laundering and tax evasion trial after the completion of her corruption trial.

ZAINI: Have you not given thought to getting another judge to hear this (case) if you are more keen to proceed earlier?

POH: I have to consult the senior DPPs.

ZAINI: (You should) think about that. Otherwise, it is fine to just maintain (the trial at) this court. So we will fix another case management on Feb 25 next year, pending your discussion.

POH: I will discuss it with Datuk Seri (senior DPP Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram).

Rosmah, 69, who was exempted from attending the proceedings, was represented by her lawyer, Datuk Geethan Ram Vincent.

On Oct 4, 2018, the wife of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak pleaded not guilty to 12 counts of money laundering involving RM7,097,750, and five counts of failing to declare her income to the Inland Revenue Board.

The offences were allegedly committed at Affin Bank Berhad, Bangunan Getah Asli branch, Jalan Ampang, here, between Dec 4, 2013 and June 8, 2017, and at the Inland Revenue Board, Kompleks Bangunan Kerajaan, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Halim, here, between May 1, 2014 and May 1, 2018. **Bernama**

New Straits Times Paper | 21 Disember 2020 | Page: 4

SOLID SYSTEM TO AVOID SCRUTINY

MEAT CARTEL 'BRIBING GOVT OFFICERS'

Senior officers from 4 agencies may be aiding fake halal meat cartel that has been operating for 40 years

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SENIOR officers from no fewer than four government agencies are believed to be working hand-in-glove with a cartel specialising in bringing non-certified meat into Malaysia and passing it off as halal-certified products.

These senior officers, entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that halal standards are upheld, have instead received money, and in some cases even women for sex, as bribes in order to turn a blind eye to the cartel's operations and ensure that the its activities go undetected.

It is understood that the cartel has been in operation for more than 40 years.

It is believed the cartel imports meat from non-halal-certified slaughterhouses in a few countries, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Spain and Mexico.

The only countries that have been certified by the Malaysian authorities for the import of halal meat are Australia, Argentina, Brazil, India, South Africa, Pakistan, Japan, New Zealand and the United States, with imports handled by the Malaysia Islamic Development Department and Veterinary Services Department.

The Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services Department, Customs Department and port police, meanwhile, are in charge of managing the supplies once they enter Malaysian ports.

The cartel's years of operations means it has a solid system to ensure the products — from the slaughterhouses until they leave the ports for the markets — escape official scrutiny.

Sources speaking to the *New Straits Times* said the process began abroad, where government agency officers entrusted with supervising the quality of the meat at the slaughterhouses would sign off on the products whether or not they met Malaysia's rigorous halal and quality standards.

A source said in some cases, the officers, after being bribed, would sign off on the products even before they arrived at meat processing plants for checks.

"Two agencies are largely re-



A woman looking at meat products at a shop in a major city. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

sponsible for issuing approvals for products from meat processing plants abroad. But the sheer number of meat products from plants of dubious quality entering Malaysia has raised questions about the system's effectiveness."

The source said once the cartel bypassed the first stage of inspections, it faced few problems bringing the products into the country via the country's ports.

The three main areas of entry for shipments, the source said, were the Port Klang Free Zone, Westport and Northport.

The cartel, said the source, had over the years worked to secure "representatives" in government agencies based at the ports.

This, said the source, was made possible only with the involvement of very senior officers from agencies working with the cartel.

"One modus operandi involves using the Customs' K8 form when the products enter the port. The K8 form means a shipment can only transit in Malaysia before being shipped out elsewhere.

"In this case, thanks to corrupt

officers, the shipment, despite being declared as K8, passes instead through another channel.

"The officer manning the channel would receive a cash bribe from a 'runner' to greenlight the cargo to leave the port via trucks.

"This runner, a civilian, deals directly with the agency's senior officer," said the source.

The goods, said the source, would then be taken to one of several warehouses, where the meat would be mixed with halal-certified meat and repacked with fake halal logos, then enter the market.

The source said the cartel did this because importing halal meat from certified sources and getting them approved by the authorities was a costly endeavour.

"As such, by eliminating the halal-certification process, the cartel stands to make a hefty profit."

The source said wholesalers and traders were then more inclined to source cheaper goods.

"As the cartel gives an assurance that the products are halal-certified, this ensures that there is a healthy demand for their goods."

Mufti: Not a sin to unknowingly consume non-halal products

KUALA LUMPUR: Muslims have been urged to remain calm and not panic over the revelation that a cartel has been shipping in non-certified meat and passing them off as halal products.

Penang Mufti Datuk Wan Salim Wan Mohd Noor said the act of consuming non-halal meat was not a sin if one truly did not know it was not halal.

He said *niat* (intention) was a key principle in Islam and in this case, it was not one's intention to consume non-halal meat.

"If one was deceived into thinking that the meat they consumed is halal when it is not, there is no

issue as there was no *niat*. "Allah is Most Merciful. He will forgive such actions," he told the *New Straits Times*.

But he urged Muslims to exercise caution as they were now aware of the matter.

He said people should educate themselves on how to identify halal labels for products, especially on imported goods.

"If one is unsure whether a product is properly halal, it is better to avoid it altogether as this is the *sunnah* of the Prophet," he said.

"The authorities must also ensure that all halal-imported meat is from certified halal sources."



Datuk Wan Salim Wan Mohd Noor

New Straits Times Paper | 22 Disember 2020 | Page: 3

'Claim about RM2m for polls an afterthought'

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Federal Territories minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor's now infamous statement that RM2 million was just pocket change for him did not escape the judge's attention during sentencing of the Umno politician yesterday.

High Court judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan made reference to the statement before ordering the Putrajaya member of parliament to serve one year in jail and a RM2 million fine.

He noted that Tengku Adnan had maintained that he was a man of means and the RM2 million which he was accused of receiving from a businessman would not entice him.

"However, RM2 million in my view, is still a substantial amount of money, even for a millionaire.

"It is fallacious to think that a wealthy person is incapable of committing wrong to make financial gains," he said in his judgment.

In his testimony after being ordered to enter his defence, Tengku Adnan admitted that he had received a RM2 million cheque from Tan Sri Chai Kin Kong. However, he claimed the money was for the campaign expenses of the Sungai Besar (Selangor) and Kuala Kangsar (Perak) by-elections on June 18 the same year.

The former Umno secretary-general also told the court that there was no reason for him to seek the RM2 million given by Chai as the amount was like "pocket money" to him.

Touching on Tengku Adnan's claims that the money had been used for the two by-elections, Zaini said there was no evidence to show this happened.

Instead, he said it was apparent that the RM2 million remained in Tadmansori's account for Tengku Adnan's own benefit.

He said it was clear Tengku Adnan had used Tadmansori Holdings as a facade to profit from corruption.

"His claim that he advanced slightly more than RM2 million for the by-elections is just an afterthought. It is, therefore, established that the accused had used Tadmansori as a facade to receive the gains of his crime," he said.

Touching on Tengku Adnan's

political conspiracy claims, Zaini said the accused had lamented that the charge against him was irrelevant, and a ploy by Umno and Barisan Nasional's rival political party to upend them by targeting him.

"I find that the accused's complaint is not novel. He is not the first politician charged with a criminal offence who has complained of political conspiracy.

"Our Constitution has given the attorney-general absolute power and unfettered discretion to prosecute criminal offences. The judiciary plays no part in that role.

"The judiciary does not partake of political shenanigans, for it is above politics. If any wrong is done, it is for the courts to

rectify or punish the wrong done."

He said the punishment prescribed under Section 165 was a maximum of two years' jail and the court was inclined to follow precedents, which indicated that a jail sentence was appropriate.

"I am also of the view that the accused should not be allowed to profit from the wrong that he committed, which was the RM2 million that he had taken for himself."

The trial began on July 2 last year with the prosecution calling 23 witnesses to testify.

The prosecution and defence submitted more than 80 items, including the application documents of AKSB to develop the Federal Territory Affordable Housing initiative, a RM2 million cheque, bank statements, Umno annual statements and documents on the estimated expenditure for the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar by-elections.

The witnesses called by the prosecution included former Kuala Lumpur mayors Tan Sri Ahmad Phasal Talib and Tan Sri Mohd Amin Nordin Abd Aziz, as well as Chai.

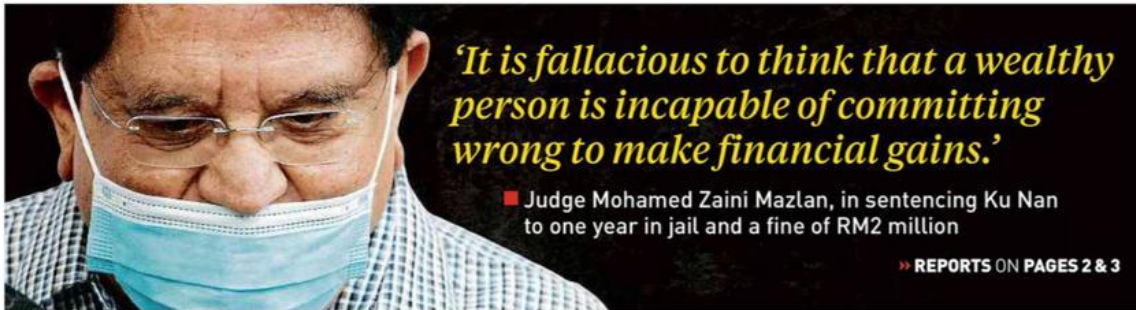
On June 30, the defence closed its case after calling four witnesses to testify over four days from March 4, with Tengku Adnan being called as the first witness.

Other witnesses were Tengku Adnan's former political secretary Datuk Mohd Rafi Alli Hassan, Simpang Renggam Umno division chief Datuk Zakaria Dullah and former Sungai Besar by-election machinery director Datuk Rizalman Mokhtar.

The judiciary does not partake of political shenanigans, for it is above politics. If any wrong is done, it is for the courts to rectify or punish the wrong done.

MOHAMED ZAINI MAZLAN
trial judge

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RM2 MILLION GRAFT CASE

KU NAN GETS ONE YEAR, RM2 MILLION FINE

Ex-FT minister emotionless as verdict is delivered, judge allows stay of execution

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FORMER Federal Territories minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor was yesterday sentenced to one year's jail and fined RM2 million after he was found guilty of corruption by receiving the same amount for himself from a businessman.

High Court judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan also ordered the Putrajaya member of parliament to a further six months' jail if he fails to pay the fine. Zaini sentenced Tengku Adnan, popularly known as Ku Nan, to jail after ruling that the prosecution had proven its case against the accused beyond all reasonable doubt.

Tengku Adnan, who just celebrated his 70th birthday and also his son's marriage on Sunday, did not show any emotion as he sat in the dock listening to the judge reading out the verdict.

Some of his family members who were seated in the gallery also remained emotionless as they heard the veteran Umno leader being sentenced.

Tengku Adnan was represented by Datuk Tan Hock Chuan while the prosecution team was led by deputy public prosecutor Julia Ibrahim. Tan later applied for a stay of execution on the jail term and fine. The judge granted the

application after Julia said she had no objections. Earlier in mitigation, Tan pleaded for the court to do away with a jail sentence and only impose a fine against his client.

He argued that it was Tengku Adnan's first offence and the court should temper justice with mercy.

"The court should not be influenced by what happens outside the courtroom. My client is a first offender and he has not committed a heinous crime."

"He has made significant contributions to the nation, particularly to those living in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur," he said, noting that Tengku Adnan had been an Umno member since 1969 and had served in the cabinet and as an MP for 17 years.

Tengku Adnan, he said, was also often forced to make personal monetary advances to Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN) due to his financial standing.

Tan also pointed out that the court should take notice that the current Perikatan Nasional (PN) government was ruling the country with a razor thin majority of just a few seats.

However, the judge immediately cut in and asked Tan whether the court should be concerned with political developments in the country when dishing out the sentence against the accused.

Tan answered that whatever sentence imposed on Tengku Adnan would have an effect on the government's majority. The lawyer also urged the court to take into consideration Tengku Adnan's age and health before sentencing the politician.

"My client is already 70 and he suffers from various ailments, including hypertension, heart and lung problems."

"He is ill... I am not making it



Former Federal Territories minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor leaving the Kuala Lumpur court complex after being found guilty of corruption by receiving RM2 million from Aset Kayamas Sdn Bhd director Tan Sri Chai Kin Kong (inset). (PIC BY ROHANNUS SHAMIR)

him. How can they say the fine should be less than RM2,000?"

"MPs come and go... there can always be elections to appoint new MPs," she said, urging the court to impose a jail sentence and also a fine of no less than RM2 million.

She also urged the court to take note that the accused held a position of power and influence, which meant whatever such individuals did was closely followed by the people.

Julia cited the case of former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo, who was sentenced to one year's jail for committing a similar offence under

the same section Tengku Adnan was charged.

Tengku Adnan was charged in his capacity as a civil servant, namely federal territories minister, with having received for himself a total of RM2 million from Tan Sri Chai Kin Kong, a director of Aset Kayamas Sdn Bhd (AKSB).

It was done via a Hong Leong Islamic Bank cheque belonging to the company, which was deposited into a CIMB account owned by Tadmansori Holdings Sdn Bhd, which Tengku Adnan had an interest in and was known to AKSB as being related to his official duties. Tengku Adnan was accused

of committing the offence under Section 165 of the Penal Code at the CIMB Bank branch in Pusat Bandar Damansara here on June 14, 2016.

The offence carries a maximum two years' jail or a fine, or both, upon conviction. On Oct 14 last year, the High Court ordered Tengku Adnan to enter his defence on the corruption charge after finding the prosecution had succeeded in establishing a case against him.

Tengku Adnan chose to give his sworn statement from the witness stand and his defence proceedings were held on Jan 17 and March 5.

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MACC probe focusing on falsification of Customs form

JOHOR BARU: The Johor Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has opened investigation papers in connection with smuggled meat being passed off as halal meat in the market.

Sources said the focus of the probe was on the falsifying of the Customs 1 form, which is the declaration of imported items, as well as on graft involving government agencies.

"MACC views this issue seriously as it involves the wellbeing of the people, especially Muslims in the country."

"The investigation will be conducted under Section 16 and Section 18 of the MACC Act 2009," a source said.

The source added that cooperation from the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, Veterinary Services Department, Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services Department and Customs Department had been obtained.

Johor MACC director Datuk Az-

mi Alias confirmed it had begun a probe into the matter.

"We urge all quarters to come forward to help in our investigation into the incident."

"Discussing this in the media will make our investigation more difficult. Those with information should come forward and assist in our probe."

On Dec 1, in a joint operation, authorities raided a "meat cartel" that smuggled uncertified frozen meat from Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine and China.

A total of 1,500 tonnes of frozen meat with an estimated value of RM30 million were seized during the raid on a warehouse at the Senai Industrial Park, Johor.

The products were said to have been smuggled through Johor's main seaports, while the warehouse was believed to be where the smugglers generated fake labels and stamps that would be used on the repackaged meat and sold nationwide.



Datuk Azmi Alias



Gagasan Baru Harapan Malaysia president Zulfirri Mohd Basir (right) speaking at a press conference in front of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission headquarters in Putrajaya earlier this month. PIC BY LUQMAN HAKIM ZUBIR

Authorities said the cartel had been active for years, and to avoid detection, they allegedly falsified import documents, permits and halal certificates, besides importing products from legitimate sources and mixing them with their stock.

Since then, two non-governmental organisations — Gagasan Baru Harapan Malaysia and Pertubuhan Kebajikan Anak Bersatu Selangor — had urged MACC to

conduct a investigation into a meat cartel that smuggled uncertified frozen meat to be sold using fake halal labels.

The *New Straits Times* yesterday reported that senior officers from no fewer than four government agencies were believed to be working hand-in-glove with a cartel specialising in bringing non-certified meat into Malaysia and passing it off as halal-certified products.

These senior officers, entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that halal standards were upheld, had instead received money, and in some cases, women for sex, as bribes to turn a blind eye to the cartel's operations and ensure that its activities went undetected.

It is understood that the cartel had been in operation for more than 40 years.

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UNDERSEA TUNNEL

'NO PLAN TO CALL OFF TUNNEL PROJECT'

As such, land from reclamation work remains necessary, says Penang chief minister

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PENANG has no plans to call off the controversial undersea tunnel project, Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said yesterday.

Chow said as such, the land reserved from the reclamation work by Tanjung Pinang Development Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of property developer Eastern & Oriental Bhd, for the undersea tunnel project and connecting roads was necessary.

Up to May this year, Tanjung Pinang Development had surrendered 36.45 hectares of the total



A file photo of the Penang undersea tunnel construction site. The ambitious project also includes three road projects. FILE PIC

53.05ha reclaimed to the Penang government. The remaining hectareage will be surrendered in the next few months.

"There is no plan to call off the

undersea tunnel project, so the (land) reserve is necessary.

"If we do not put in place the (land) reserve, where are we going to connect the undersea tunnel

when it is built?

"For now, no decision has been made not to build the undersea tunnel," he said here yesterday.

Chow said even the Pan Island

Link highway project by SRS Consortium would be connected to the road reserve.

In July this year, the *New Straits Times* reported that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission had relaunched a probe into the undersea tunnel project following new evidence which it received on the matter.

The project had courted controversy in the past, especially over its RM305 million feasibility studies, as well as the nearly two-year delay in its completion.

The Penang government maintained that it never paid anything to Consortium Zenith Construction Sdn Bhd, whether by cash or land, for the feasibility study of the undersea tunnel project.

The ambitious project consists of four components, including three road projects measuring 30km and the undersea tunnel, costing an estimated RM6.3 billion in total.

Former Penang chief minister Lim Guan Eng is facing graft charges over the undersea tunnel project.

New Straits Times Paper | 22 Disember 2020 | Page: 4

Maqis denies involvement with meat cartel

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services Department (Maqis) has denied involvement with a meat cartel that imports non-certified meat products and passes them off as halal products.

Director-general Saiful Yazan Alwi said it was cooperating with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in a probe into a senior officer, who is allegedly acting as a go-between for the agency and the cartel.

"On our end, we don't compromise on integrity."

"If there are reports, we would have investigated them, but till today, there has been none."

"It might not be Maqis because there are a number of government agencies involved in matters concerning the entry point

(for the import of meat).

"We are serious about this. If there are allegations that it was from our end, I can assure you we can control it as we don't have that many personnel."

Saiful said any party with information on the case may report it to MACC.

He said the imported meat could have been smuggled in through other means or channels.

"We cannot deny that even though the authorities have done their best, there is a risk of illegal channels elsewhere, making enforcement difficult."

Commenting on a raid by Maqis earlier this year on a meat cartel's operation in Johor, he said the syndicate might have changed its modus operandi or

slowed down its operation.

He said regulations at the ports were sufficient, but possibly hampered by the involvement of irresponsible parties.

He said stringent checks at port areas also meant that those who entered the areas would have their MyKad details recorded.

"We can also cross-check the specifications and certified halal logos in the linked system with the certified countries."

The Customs Department pledged to launch an internal investigation into allegations that the cartel had engaged government officers to ensure that un-certified imported meat bypassed checks.

Its director-general, Datuk Abdul Latif Abdul Kadir, said the investigation would be carried

out via its Internal Investigation and Integrity Units.

The probe, he said, would identify if there were rogue Customs officers aiding the meat cartel to smuggle non-certified meat into Malaysia.

"No compromise. Our Customs personnel are always reminded to stay away from corruption."

"Stern action will be taken against anyone involved," he said in a text message.

Following the report, he said, the department would improve its standard operating procedures to eliminate potential weaknesses.

"This effort is continuous."

However, when asked on which of the procedures was most at risk of abuse by its staff, he declined to elaborate.



Saiful Yazan Alwi

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JUDICIAL REVIEW APPLICATION DISMISSED

RM2.2 million SC fine on Deloitte appropriate, rules judge

KUALA LUMPUR: The decision by the Securities Commission (SC) to impose a fine of RM2.2 million on Deloitte P.T.Y was appropriate and proportionate to the gravity and seriousness of the breaches committed by the auditing firm, said High Court judge Datuk Seri Murni Yusma.

In dismissing Deloitte's application for a judicial review to challenge the ruling by the SC, she said the court was of the view that the SC had not misdirected itself in law or failed to take into account relevant consideration in arriving at its decision.

"The respondent (RC) has ap-

plied the proper construction and interpretation of the relevant legislative provisions in light of duties and responsibilities of the respondent as a regulator of the capital markets."

"The applicant has failed in any event to demonstrate that the decisions of the respondent or any part of those amounts to a decision that no reasonable authority could ever have come to."

"The said decision does not suffer any infirmity of legality and the grounds of challenge raised by the applicant do not disclose any other flaw for this court to take into measurement by way of

judicial review."

"Accordingly, the court dismisses the applicant's application for judicial review with costs of RM20,000," she said.

Counsel Datuk Malik Ibrahim Karim represented Deloitte, while lawyer Bernard Navin Silva appeared for the SC.

Malik Ibrahim said that he would consult his client whether to file an appeal against the decision.

It was reported earlier that the SC had fined Deloitte RM2.2 million for four breaches linked to the RM2.4 billion bond (rukuk) issued by Bandar Malaysia Sdn Bhd (BMBS), a Malaysia Devel-

opment Berhad (IMDB) subsidiary in 2014.

Deloitte was the statutory auditor for BMBS and IMDB Real Estate Sdn Bhd (IMREB RE), now known as TIC City Sdn Bhd, for their financial years ending March 31, 2015 to 2016.

On Nov 14 last year, Deloitte filed the judicial review application against the SC's decision to dismiss its application to review the administrative sanctions and retain the sanctions imposed.

On Nov 25 last year, Justice Murni granted leave to Deloitte to commence its judicial review application.

In its application, the auditing firm sought to overturn the SC's review decision on Aug 19 last year, which maintained the RM2.2 million fine against Deloitte imposed by the SC on Jan 30 last year.

Deloitte also sought for a certiorari order to quash the SC's review decision to impose the fine, besides seeking for the return of the RM2.2 million it paid as a fine to the SC in the event that the court rules in favour of its judicial review application, costs and any further order deemed fit and appropriate by the court. **Bernama**

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NEWS / Story of the day

REPORTS BY: Nuradzimmah Daim, Dawn Chan, Dhesegan Bala Krishnan, Farah Sethi and Azdee Amir

PRICE HIKE FEAR

TRADERS OF IMPORTED BEEF STUNG BY 'MEAT CARTEL'

They urge authorities to speedily resolve issue as financial losses mount amid big slump in sales

KUALA LUMPUR

TRADERS dealing in imported beef claim they have been struggling to make ends meet ever since the activities of a meat cartel passing off non-certified imported meat as halal beef were exposed recently.

Stung by the financial losses, they are hoping that the authorities will find a speedy solution to the issue.

Mohamed Hussein, 41, who plys his trade at the Chow Kit market in the city, said imported meat traders at the market have found the going tough since the cartel's activities were exposed.

Hussein, a third generation meat seller, said he was the first in his family to sell only imported meat and was now ruling the decision.

Speaking to the *New Straits Times*, he gestured at the rows of stalls selling imported meat, many bereft of customers.

He also pointed to a slab of beef hanging from a hook at his stall.

"This 8kg slab of imported beef has been available since Sunday. Previously, I could sell about eight kilos a day. Now, I'm lucky if I get to sell a kilo," he said.

Hussein said one of his suppliers was the subject of rumours on social media and claimed that the brand of meat sold was among those linked to the meat cartel.

He said although news reports and even the authorities had yet to name any of the companies

involved in the scandal, it had not stopped people from accepting the rumours as fact.

"I've had to field numerous questions from market-goers on my suppliers' halal status. They showed me photos found online supposedly tying my supplier to the cartel."

"I've had to explain that this isn't true and that my supplier is a legitimate one," he said.

Hussein urged the authorities to resolve the issues swiftly so that the people's faith in the halal status of products would be promptly restored.

"For the sake of traders like me, they should publish a list of unscrupulous brands tied to the syndicate to clear the air once and for all," he said.

Another seller, who goes by the nickname Din Daging, said sales were about to pick up from the slump he experienced during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period, only to be hit by the latest controversy.

"The pace was just about to pick up when this happened. My customers, even regular ones, are now grilling me over the authenticity of my products' halal status," said the 40-year-old.

The same, however, could not be said for sellers of local beef, who are experiencing a boost in sales.

One trader, who only wished to be known as Nizam, 40, said he used to slaughter three cows which would be enough for a week's worth of sales.

"I now have to slaughter six cows. And I trade six days a week, so I'm selling on average a whole cow a day," he said.

Nizam said some customers complained about the high price



A man buying beef at a market yesterday. PIC BY HAFIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

of local beef but bought them anyway as they now had doubts over the halal status of imported beef.

In **IPOH**, meat traders at the Kinta Market fear that the meat cartel expose will trigger a price hike for imported meat.

A trader, who wished to be known as Dass, 40, said the rigorous inspections on imported meats following the expose would cause supply disruptions.

"Suppliers will claim that their containers are held by the authorities for inspection and, therefore, they have had a drop in supply. Eventually, they will increase the meat price, which will affect small traders and consumers," he said.

Dass, who has over 22 years of experience in the meat industry, blamed corruption among enforcement authorities as the root cause for the meat cartel case.

"My father used to warn me never to take meat from countries like Brazil and Argentina because their halal status is dubious."

"In fact, meat traders generally avoid selling beef from Brazil and Argentina. But, what always intrigued me is that these products are often sold in large supermarkets," he said.

"If meat traders like us are aware of this, how come enforcement officers allowed these products to enter the country for 40 years?"

However, Dass said, many consumers were still unaware of the meat cartel syndicate, but in the weeks to come the meat industry would suffer the impact.

Another meat seller, Fikri Hariri Lubis Abd Malik, 26, said households generally prefer local beef while restaurants opt for imported meat which is cheaper.

"This was the trend even before the meat cartel issue was exposed. But, I notice customers have grown wary over the halal status."

"Even my regular customers would repeatedly ask me and I assure them the meat is halal... to the best of my knowledge," he said.

Consumers here also voiced their suspicions over imported beef. One consumer, who only wanted to be known as Muhammad Dzein, 25, urged the public to support the local meat industry.

"We do not know from where the meat is imported. The halal status may have been compromised."

"We need to take precautions by buying local beef now."

"Enforcement authorities at the borders must root out illegal meat cartels to prevent this incident from recurring," he said.

Nor Izzani Ahmad Ibrahim, 21, whose family runs a restaurant and provides catering services for weddings, said her customers were omitting beef from their wedding menu.

"Since they are worried over the halal status, they prefer chicken now to beef."

"Those who do order beef insist that we get them local meat only," she said.



Datuk Seri Dr Zulkifli Mohamed Al-Bakri

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MEAT CARTEL SCANDAL

MALAYSIA'S OVERALL FOOD SAFETY 'NEEDS A REVIEW'

Ensuring imported food safe for consumption is of paramount importance

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MALAYSIA needs to review its overall food safety procedures following the *New Straits Times*' expose of the meat cartel scandal.

Federation of Malaysian Con-

sumers Association (Fomca) president Datuk Dr N. Marimuthu said while companies could export their produce here, they must ensure that safety standards were met.

"It (imported food product) can come from any part of the world, but ensuring the food is safe for consumption is of paramount importance, apart from obtaining halal certification," he said, adding that the recent expose was a wake-up call to place more emphasis on food safety and security.

Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association president Datuk Nadzim Johan said the authorities must address loopholes in awarding the approved permit (AP) to local frozen meat importers.

"The relevant authorities must investigate whether these AP holders are genuine importers and do not abuse the permits."

Meanwhile, an official at the Russian Trade Representative Office in Malaysia said the federation viewed the halal food issue seriously as the Muslim population there numbers more than 20 million.

She said the Russian authorities have their own set of strict requirements for meat export and would abide by the regulations imposed by the respective countries that imported its produce.

"There is a growing demand for halal produce. At present, we do not have companies exporting halal meat to Malaysia, although some have expressed an interest

in doing so.

"We are working on the halal certification, but it will not be a quick process as we will have to wait for feedback from the Malaysian authorities," she said.

She hoped the recent development would not affect cooperation between the two countries.

NST, on Dec 21, reported that a meat cartel syndicate has been allegedly bribing senior government officers from four agencies to bring in non-certified meat into Malaysia and passing it off as halal-certified products.

It is believed that the cartel imports meat from non-halal certified slaughterhouses in countries such as Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Spain and Mexico. The cartel has been in operation for more than 40 years.