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11 COUNTS

Foundation director claims trial to misusing RM86,000

BUTTERWORTH: A Yayasan Kemajuan India Wilayah Persekutuan director was charged at the Sessions Court here yesterday with 11 counts of misuse of property in the form of cash totalling RM86,000 in August last year.

Govindarajoo R. Muniandy, 65, claimed trial to the charges that were read to him by a court interpreter before judge Zulhazmi Abdullah.

Based on the charge sheet, Govindarajoo, as the foundation's director, had misused the cash belonging to the foundation, at Maybank Bhd in Taman Indrawasih, Jalan Chain Ferry

here on Aug 25 and Aug 26, last year. The charges were framed under Section 403 of the Penal Code, which carries a maximum five years' imprisonment and whipping and a fine, upon conviction.

Govindarajoo, who was unrepresented, also claimed trial to 11 alternative charges of misuse of property, in the form of cash totalling RM86,00, at the same place and date. The charges were framed under Section 406 of the Penal Code, which carries a maximum 10 years' imprisonment and whipping and a fine upon conviction.

Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) deputy public prosecutor Mohd Afif Ali prosecuted.

Afif urged the court to impose RM50,000 bail for all 11 charges as well as additional conditions, namely for the accused to report to the nearest MACC office once a month and to hand over his passport to the court until the end of the case.

Govindarajoo appealed to the court for a lower bail of RM5,000.

"I am 65 years old with three children, two of whom are in university. I do not have a fixed income as I am only doing con-



Yayasan Kemajuan India Wilayah Persekutuan director Govindarajoo R. Muniandy (left) entering the Sessions Court in Butterworth, Penang, yesterday. PIC BY MIKAIL ONG

sultancy work. As such, I can't afford the RM50,000 bail.

"I have cooperated with the MACC and had never disobeyed any of its orders. I am here to clear my name."

Zulhazmi set bail at RM2,000 for each of the charges, bringing the total bail to RM22,000.

"The accused has to report to the nearest MACC office once a month until the disposal of his case as well as surrender his passport to the court until the end of his case," he added.

Zulhazmi fixed Sept 1 for mention for the accused to appoint his lawyer.

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LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP

'LCS DELAY AFFECTS NAVY CAPABILITIES'

PAC findings have also hurt morale of personnel, says navy

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THE Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) in a statement yesterday said the delay in the completion of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) project has had a negative impact on the capabilities of the combat navy fleet.

As the end user, it said the findings had adversely affected the morale of naval personnel, who required the ships to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The statement was issued as an immediate response to the Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) findings on the LCS project for six ships worth RM9 billion.

"The LCS acquisition is critical to preserve the sovereignty and security of the country.

"RMN would like to call on all parties to join hands and support the smooth implementation of this project to preserve sovereignty and safety," it said.

It added that it welcomed the recommendations presented by the PAC and wanted the best move forward in the LCS project.

It said the LCS were needed to advance the combat capabilities of the navy fleet to be in line with developments in the regional geostrategic and geopolitical security landscape.

"RMN appreciates the decision by the government to continue this project in the interest of national sovereignty and will support investigations into any leaks in this project," it said.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) would also announce the findings of its investigation into the LCS project soon.

MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said the matter



MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki (in light blue jacket) speaking to Malaysian Corruption Watch officials at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Academy in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY HAZREEN MOHAMAD

must be referred to the Attorney-General's Chambers and other parties before disclosing it to the public.

"I have issued a statement before (regarding the investigation).

"I have to maintain the sensitivity of the investigation and the confidentiality of this case because it not only involves the MACC, but also the A-GC and others."

He said this after launching the annual meeting of the Malaysian Corruption Watch (MCW) at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Academy here yesterday.

Present was MCW president Jais Abdul Karim.

Azam said the investigation was in its final stage.

On Thursday, PAC published a report on the project. Since then, various parties had urged the MACC to complete its investigation into the defects in the construction of the six LCS.

Among those who called for the investigation were opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Iskandar Puteri member of parliament Lim Kit Siang, Permatang Pauh MP Nurul Izzah Anwar and Umno Youth chief Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki.

PAC found the government had paid RM6.083 billion to Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNS) for the direct negotiation project, but no ship had been delivered so far.

PAC chairman Wong Kah Woh said the LCS 1 project was confirmed to be less than 44 per cent complete while the launching ceremony, as observed by witnesses, had created an impression that the ship was ready.

Page 1 pic: The littoral combat ship 'KD Maharaja Lela' at the Boustead Naval Shipyard in Lumut a few years ago.

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Story of the day / NEWS | 3

'WRONGDOERS WILL FACE JUSTICE'

HISHAM: FIRST LCS READY WITHIN 2 YEARS

Defence minister, however, unable to tell Dewan Negara exact timeline on 6 vessels' completion

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THE Defence Ministry has projected that the first of six littoral combat ships (LCS) will be delivered to the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) in one to two years.

Senior Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said for now, he was unable to provide an exact timeline on when the vessels would be completed because the cabinet had given his ministry six months to take steps to revive the project.

He said this required holding engagement sessions with vendors, including those in France, as well as banking agencies.

"I can state that within the next one or two years, we hope the first vessel can be completed.

"I will provide regular updates on the status of the vessels.

"I will inform the cabinet about what we have done to ensure that this time things are on schedule," he said during the question-and-answer session at the Dewan Ne-



Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein



A littoral combat ship being constructed at the Boustead Naval Shipyard in Lumut in 2016. FILE PIC

gara yesterday. Hishammuddin was responding to a question by Senator Datuk Razali Idris (Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia) on when the RMN could expect to receive the LCS.

The minister also fielded a supplementary question by Senator Datuk Husain Awang (Pas) on what the Defence Ministry had done to handle the LCS issue.

Hishammuddin said the project would continue as per RMN's needs as hundreds of vendors, many of whom are ex-service-

men, depend on it for their livelihood.

He said those involved in the project found guilty of wrongdoing would be brought to justice.

"We have provided total cooperation to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

"We have met them 15 times, not just in the context of when I was defence minister.

"This involved all stakeholders, including the RMN, Defence Ministry, Economic Planning Unit, Finance Ministry and even the cabinet, to ensure the core issue,

which is the delivery of the vessels to the RMN, is achieved, as well as to ensure vendors are cared for, for the benefit of our veterans.

"I am aware of the many weaknesses (of the issue), I am disappointed and so are many others.

"But we must look to the future, seek justice and ensure the vessels are delivered, as well as find ways to prevent this from happening in the future."

The LCS project is the largest acquisition in the history of the Defence Ministry, with an overall

value of RM9 billion.

The contract began in 2013 and was projected to end in 10 years.

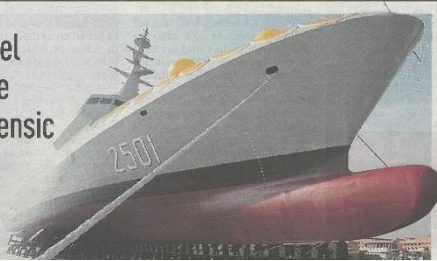
The PAC, in its report last Thursday, said the government had paid RM6.083 billion to Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd, in a deal that was signed via direct negotiation project, but not a single vessel has been delivered.

PAC chairman Wong Kah Woh had said excess costs for the project had ballooned to RM1.4 billion, with RM400 million spent to settle old debts from a previous patrol ship project.

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PM: Reports from panel investigating LCS to be made public, 2019 forensic audit declassification proposed

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A Littoral Combat Ship being constructed at the Boustead Naval Shipyard in Lumut in 2016. FILE PIC

RM9 BILLION RMN PROJECT

'GOVT TO DECLASSIFY REPORTS ON LCS'

Cabinet also wants MACC to speed up probe, says prime minister

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THE government has agreed to declassify reports from the Special Investigative Committee on Procurement, Governance

and Finance on the Royal Malaysian Navy's Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) project.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob yesterday said the cabinet also proposed to declassify the forensic audit report on the LCS project made in 2019. However, he said, the government would seek the advice of the attorney-general and auditor general before doing so.

Ismail Sabri said this after chairing a cabinet meeting, and having a meeting with Attorney-General Tan Sri Idrus Harun and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki yesterday.

"The cabinet has agreed to request MACC to speed up the probe and if strong evidence is obtained, the attorney-general should charge the individuals responsible."

"Nevertheless, the decisions made by the cabinet today (yesterday) will not affect the mobilisation process under the LCS Recovery Plan, which was agreed on April 20."

He said the government was committed to continuing the LCS project due to its importance to the country's defence and to cater to the naval forces.

"On behalf of the government, I give the assurance that the investigation into this matter will be carried out transparently and that the government will not protect anyone involved," he said here.

The RM9-billion LCS project contract was awarded to Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNS) through direct negotiations.

BNS is a subsidiary of Boustead Holdings Bhd, whose largest shareholder is the Armed Forces Fund Board (LTAT).

However, the Public Accounts Committee, on Aug 4, said BNS had not delivered a single ship although the government has paid RM6.083 billion.

Senior Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein had, on Monday, said the government would report on the schedule and progress of the LCS project in stages.

The Defence Ministry, he said, had been given six months to revive the project, adding that the first ship would be delivered to the navy in two years.

The Special Investigative Committee on Procurement, Governance and Finance report was led by former auditor general Tan Sri Ambrin Buang.

ER TIMES

ZUHUR	ASAR	MAGHRIB	ISTAK
1:19	4:38	7:24	8:35
1:26	4:43	7:34	8:46
1:21	4:39	7:28	8:39
1:13	4:32	7:17	8:28
1:16	4:34	7:21	8:33
1:24	4:41	7:31	8:43

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Former Air Kelantan Sdn Bhd general manager Wan Mohamad Zamri Wan Ismail (left) leaving the Sessions Court in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, yesterday. PIC BY NIK ABDULLAH NIK OMAR

RM10,000 BRIBE

Ex-Air Kelantan GM charged with graft

KOTA BARU: A former general manager of Air Kelantan Sdn Bhd was charged in the Sessions Court here, yesterday, with accepting a RM10,000 bribe from a subcontractor company in 2015.

Wan Mohamad Zamri Wan Ismail, 61, pleaded not guilty after the charge was read before judge Zaman Mohd Noor.

He was alleged to have accepted the bribe on Jan 22, 2015, near Maybank, Jalan Mahmood, here, from Ng Tse Wei, through a United Oversea Bank (Malaysia) Bhd cheque dated Jan 21, 2015.

The money was an inducement to help Zog Technology be appointed as the subcontractor to design, build, prepare and test the Merbau Chondong Water Supply Scheme Phase II, Package 1 in Machang, Kelantan.

The charge was framed under Section 16(a)(A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Act 2009 (Act 694) and can be punished under Section 24 (1) of the same law, which provides a jail term not exceeding 20 years and a fine no less than five times the amount of the bribe or RM10,000, whichever

is higher, upon conviction.

Deputy public prosecutor of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Mariah Omar prosecuted, and the accused was represented by Ahmad 'Adha' Amir Yasser Amri.

The court allowed a RM7,000 bail in one surety. The accused also has to surrender his passport to the court and report to the nearest police station or MACC office on the first day of each month until the end of the case.

The court set Sept 28 for mention. **Bernama**

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Wan Helmi Wan Darus (left) Azlan Abd Hashim (centre) and Nahairizaki Mohd Zin covering their faces at the Alor Star Sessions Court yesterday. BERNAMA PIX

RM50,000 EACH

Contractors fined over fake bank statements

ALOR STAR: Three contractors were fined RM50,000 each after pleading guilty to using falsified bank statements to secure solid waste jobs three years ago.

Azlan Abd Hashim, 48, Nahairizaki Mohd Zin, 42, and Wan Helmi Wan Darus, 49, pleaded guilty after they were charged separately before Sessions Court judge Harmi Thamri Mohamad yesterday.

The charges carry up to two years' jail and a fine, or both.

The trio admitted to separate charges of submitting falsified bank documents to secure tenders from solid waste manage-

ment company E-Idaman between 2018 and 2019.

Azlan pleaded guilty to a charge of using an altered Maybank Islamic statement of Excell Tech Enterprise for October, November and December 2018 as a genuine document to secure the tender.

Nahairizaki pleaded guilty to a charge of using an altered CIMB Bank statement of Jakie Enterprise, while Wan Helmi pleaded guilty to a charge of using an altered RHB Bank statement of WH Awana to secure the tender.

The tenders were for privatisa-

tion of solid waste collection and general cleaning work in the northern states worth between RM58,000 and RM92,000 each month.

They committed the offence at Wisma Idaman, Bandar Stargate here, in January 2019.

The accused pleaded for leniency as they had lost their income after the tenders were terminated by the company.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy public prosecutor Rehab Abdul Shukur appeared for prosecution, while the accused were not represented.

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UNDER DISCUSSION

Cabinet agrees in principle to make public LCS audit report

PUTRAJAYA: The cabinet yesterday agreed in principle that the littoral combat ship (LCS) project forensic audit report be made public, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar.

However, he said, it would be made after discussions with Senior Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and other stakeholders on the mechanism of disclosure as there were sensitive issues that could not be made public.

At a press conference after the Merdeka Month Celebration of the Legal Affairs Division here yesterday, Wan Junaidi said: "In principle, cabinet ministers emphasise that the disclosure will be made."

"I believe that sensitive things, (due to) security issues, should not be disclosed."

He said this was also a practice in the United States and England, where sensitive issues were not made public for security purposes.

Earlier, the cabinet had proposed that the forensic audit report conducted in 2019 be declassified, but the process needed to



A littoral combat ship (LCS) under construction at the Boustead Naval Shipyard in Lumut, Perak, on Saturday. Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar says the government may establish a royal commission to investigate the LCS issue. PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

get the advice and views of the attorney-general and the auditor general.

Wan Junaidi did not rule out the possibility that the government would establish a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to investigate the LCS issue.

"Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob) (in a cabinet meeting) mentioned one more thing (about LCS RCI)."

"So it means that the question (LCS RCI) has not been written

off, even though the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission has done its best," he said.

Hishammuddin, when winding up the debate on the motion related to the LCS issue at Dewan Negara on Tuesday, said he would bring the RCI proposal for cabinet approval yesterday.

He said this in response to the suggestions of senators, who urged the government to establish an RCI to investigate the LCS issue to ensure that no guilty party

escaped prosecution.

Wan Junaidi said MACC needed to update the investigation papers relating to the LCS case before it was returned to the Attorney-General's Chambers for a decision so that other people might be prosecuted.

"However, there was a discussion in the cabinet and the cabinet's decision was open-ended."

"MACC's investigation will continue and the cabinet reiterates that we will not protect any-

one in the LCS issue."

The Public Accounts Committee previously revealed nine proceedings related to the LCS issue starting on Nov 18, 2020.

It found that not a single LCS had been completed even though the contract for the project awarded through direct negotiation worth RM6.083 billion provided that five ships should be completed and delivered up to August this year.

Bernama

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Headmistress charged with submitting forged document to make food supply payment claim

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FALSE FOOD SUPPLY PAYMENT CLAIM

Headmistress claims trial to forgery charges

KUANTAN: A 58-year-old headmistress pleaded not guilty at the Sessions Court here yesterday to two counts of making a false

claim to supply meals under a sports programme five years ago. Lee Wai Teng from Raub, who was charged with one main charge

and an alternative charge, claimed trial when both charges were read before judge Datuk Ahmad Zamzani Mohd Zain.

The accused was charged with handing a document containing a food supply payment claim for a preschool sports clinic programme dated Nov 21, 2017 to an administrative assistant. She allegedly knew that the information on the document was false.

For the alternative charge, the accused was charged with allegedly submitting the food supply payment claim document as genuine despite having knowledge that it was a forged document. The mother of two allegedly committed the offence at SJK(C) Sungai Lui in Raub on Dec 6, 2017.

For the main charge, Lee faces



The accused, Lee Wai Teng (centre), arriving at the Sessions Court in Kuantan yesterday.
PIC BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

a maximum jail term of 20 years and a fine of five times the value of the offence committed or RM10,000, whichever is higher, under the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009.

For the alternative charge, Lee faces a jail term of up to two years or a fine, or both, upon conviction under the Penal Code.

MACC prosecuting officer Kamariah Seman proposed RM10,000 bail with one surety.

Counsel Chuah Shyue Chien, who represented Lee, said his client, who was still in service, had to support her children and elderly mother, who is in her 90s.

Zamzani allowed bail at RM8,000 in one surety and ordered the accused to surrender her passport to the court, and to report to the Raub MACC office at the beginning of each month from September onwards.

The court set Sept 15 for mention. **By T.N. Alagesh**