

The Star June 2020

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1. SRC trial: Don't convict Najib based on court of public opinion



KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is facing criminal charges involving the misappropriation of RM42mil in SRC International Sdn Bhd funds, should not be convicted based on the court of public opinion, the High Court heard.

Lawyer Farhan Read, one of the lawyers in Najib's defence team, said on Tuesday (June 2) that it was understandable that the public would be angry over the case as the charges levelled against the Pekan MP were serious allegations.

He added that the court of public opinion, however, did not concern itself with being fair.

"But this court today should not be influenced by opinion. It should decide based on law and facts," Farhan added in his closing submissions.

The defence trial started on Dec 3 last year lasted 33 days with 19 witnesses taking the stand.

Najib's defence had largely contended that he did not know the monies in his bank accounts originated from SRC International, a subsidiary of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

A total of 807 exhibits were tendered in court.

The prosecution had earlier called 57 witnesses to the stand.

Najib faces seven charges — three for criminal breach of trust, one for abuse of power and three for money laundering involving SRC International funds totalling RM42mil.

The three-day hearing of submissions started on Monday (June 1) and continues this afternoon before Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali.

2. Sabah minister Peter Anthony grilled for seven hours over graft probe



KOTA KINABALU: Sabah Cabinet minister Datuk Peter Anthony was grilled for seven hours over the alleged issuance of RM1.5bil direct contract to three road maintenance companies.

Peter, who is the state Infrastructure Development Minister, entered the state Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) headquarters at Mini Putrajaya here at 10.22am Tuesday (June 9) and emerged with his lawyer at 5.22pm.

He told reporters that the investigation was about road concessions following complaints from the public.

"The concessions were given a long time ago during the previous government.

"We are only continuing with the coordination and re-evaluation process, which needed to be improved," he said.

Peter said that the projects were not new and that the contractors appointed previously did not perform.

"I was called in to record a normal statement but we believe it also has to do with politics," he claimed.

Peter said Sabah is no longer part of the government but an Opposition state.

"There's no case actually. We will give our full cooperation. If there is a need for an arrest, then it is up to them, that's their power," he said, adding that there could be more leaders or state Cabinet ministers called up by the MACC to assist in investigations.

He said as a government servant and a state minister, he was ready to be called in again for further questioning.

"I will not run away. I will face them," he added.

Peter also said MACC officers had conducted the investigation and taken his statement professionally.

"But Sabah leaders will stay solid behind the Chief Minister (Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal). Nothing can divide us and we shall remain strong," he said.

So far, MACC has not made any official statement on the ongoing investigations.

But sources said they were probing claims of irregularities in the direct award of road maintenance projects to three companies in Sabah.

Prior to GE14, Peter and Shafie were among Warisan leaders who were questioned over a graft probe involving rural development projects.

Shafie was former rural development minister during his stint as Barisan Nasional cabinet minister under then premier Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

3. Cops investigating Bersatu's Ulya's post allegedly defaming MACC



KUALA LUMPUR: Bukit Aman is investigating Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia Youth information chief Ulya Aqamah Husamuddin (*pic*) over a Facebook post, which allegedly defamed the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), says Comm Datuk Huzir Mohamed.

The Bukit Aman CID director said police have begun investigations following a police report lodged by the MACC.

"We received reports from the party's youth wing and the MACC.

"We are investigating the matter," he told a press conference in Bukit Aman on Wednesday (June 10).

It was reported that Ulya, in a Facebook post, had alleged that the MACC's probe into Bersatu Youth exco-members was politically motivated.

He was subsequently questioned by MACC in connection with the investigation into cash missing from Muar MP Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman's home.

On another matter, Comm Huzir said police have started an investigation on Syed Saddiq's aide Siti Nurul Hidayah Shaziman after MACC lodged a report over allegations that MACC officers had intimidated her during questioning.

Siti Nurul Hidayah is one of the witnesses to the investigation of the missing cash.

"Both investigations are conducted by the Bukit Aman CID Special Investigation Unit (D5)," he said.

In an unrelated case, Comm Huzir said police have concluded investigations involving former water, land and natural resources minister Xavier Jayakumar.

"The investigation paper has been sent to the deputy public prosecutor," he added.

It was reported that Jayakumar was investigated over a video clip where he had said that the recent Dewan Rakyat sitting would be "worthless" and "rubbish".

A total of 33 reports were lodged against the Kuala Langat MP for the alleged comment.

4. MACC arrests three company directors for alleged bribery over RM90mil govt contract

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has arrested three company directors for alleged bribery to secure an advertising contract worth RM90mil under a government agency last year.

The directors, aged from 31 and 48, were arrested on Wednesday (June 10) evening when they were called to have their statements recorded here.

Sources said that investigators had also identified officers of the government agency who were involved.

"The MACC expects to carry out a series of arrests against individuals who we believe are in league with the directors," said the source.

According to the source, the company had provided false information for a tender and were later awarded the contract.

It is believed the company did not have the right qualification for the job and had in fact failed a technical and financial evaluation.

"However, because they had bribed certain officials, conditions that the company had to meet were set aside, were awarded the job," said the source.

It is understood that the bribery involved a sum of RM5mil.

MACC deputy chief commissioner Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya confirmed the arrests.

He said the suspects have been remanded for four days.

5. High Court dismisses govt's 1MDB-linked suit against PBAKM to forfeit RM100,000

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court here has dismissed an application filed by the government to forfeit RM100,000 allegedly received by Yayasan Persatuan Bekas Anggota Kemas Malaysia (PBAKM) from Datuk Seri Najib Razak eight years ago.

The monies were said to be proceeds from illegal activities involving 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

Justice Muhammad Jamil Hussin made the ruling after finding the prosecution, as the applicant, had failed to prove whether the monies were indeed received by PBAKM from Najib either partially or wholly.

The court said the applicant failed to show which parts of the monies that came from Najib or from other sources.

In his judgment, Justice Jamil said Najib had issued a cheque dated Oct 19, 2013 with the amount RM100,000 to PBAKM and the cheque was deposited into the respondent's (PBAKM) account on Oct 22 the same year.

The respondent's bank account also showed that since Najib's cheque was deposited, there had been inflow and outflow of transactions into its bank account and the lowest balance in the account was RM1,512.46 dated March 31, 2016.

There were more transactions later in the account and the latest balance as of May 13, last year, was RM805,751.13.

"It is clear that the RM100,000 in question and the latest balance in the respondent's account are a mixture of money from Najib and other sources," he said here on Thursday.

PBAKM had never denied in its affidavit that it received the money from Najib but denied it came from illegal activities.

The forfeiture suit against PBAKM is part of the multiple forfeiture suits filed against 41 respondents to recover about RM270mil from 1MDB's funds, as announced by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission last year.

6. 'Missing lawyer' remanded seven days over Risda land deal



Ubu being escorted by MACC investigators at the Kota Kinabalu courthouse on Saturday.

KOTA KINABALU: A Sabah lawyer, said to be missing, has been arrested by graft investigators probing a 2014 Risda land deal for which a state minister has been charged with money laundering earlier this week.

The lawyer Michael Persius Ubu, arrested by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on Friday (June 12), was remanded on Saturday (June 13) for seven days by magistrate Lovelt Natasha Charles

The application for remand was made by MACC prosecuting officer Mohd Faliq Basiruddin, while Ubu was represented by lawyer Zahir Shah.

Ubu, sporting the MACC orange lock-up garb when he arrived in court at 9.40am, is among some 21 lawyers being sought by authorities.

He has been sought by the MACC since 2017 in connection with investigations into the RM150mil Risda land deal in Sabah's central Tongod district which fell through due to issues of native land conversion.

It is understood that Ubu returned to Sabah earlier this month and turned up at the MACC office around 1.30pm on Friday. He was formally arrested at 4.15pm.

"We need time to carry out our investigations and after this, we will submit our investigation to the public prosecutors office. If there is an order, they will prosecute," a MACC official said.

On Friday, family members of Ubu said, through a lawyer, that Ubu's legal firm had paid back RM18mil over the land deal.

They claimed Risda agreed to the settlement, and that Risda did not face any losses with the interests paid.

The case involves the sale of two plots of land to Risda in 2014. The deal fell through even though a RM15mil down-payment had been paid by Risda through Ubu's legal firm.

On Thursday (June 11), Sabah's Infrastructure Minister Datuk Peter Anthony claimed trial to five money-laundering charges involving RM8.75mil at the Sessions Court here.

Peter was arrested in 2017 in connection with the Risda investigations into criminal breach of trust.

MACC sources have not ruled out more charges from their Risda investigations.

7. 'Missing' lawyer linked to Risda land deal arrested

KOTA KINABALU: A "missing" lawyer has been arrested by graft investigators probing a 2014 Risda land deal where a state minister was charged with money laundering.

He was arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on Friday and remanded for seven days by magistrate Lovelt Natasha Charles.

The application for remand was made by MACC prosecuting officer Mohd Faliq Basiruddin.

He is among 21 Malaysian lawyers wanted by the authorities.

Since 2017, he was sought by the MACC in its probe into a RM150mil Risda land deal in Sabah's Tongod district that failed to materialise over native land conversion issues.

It is understood that he returned to Sabah earlier this month and turned up at the MACC office at 1.30pm on Friday before being arrested at 4.15pm.

"We need time to carry out investigations. We will submit our papers to the public prosecutor's office.

"If there is an order, they will prosecute," an MACC official said.

On Friday, his family members via a lawyer told the media that his legal firm paid back RM18mil from the land deal that did not go through.

They claimed the settlement was agreed to by Risda, which faced no losses with the interest paid.

The case involved the sale of two plots of land in Tongod to Risda in 2014, which fell through although a RM15mil down payment had been paid by Risda through the lawyer's legal firm.

On Thursday, state Infrastructure Minister Datuk Peter Anthony claimed trial to five money-laundering charges involving RM8.75mil at the Sessions Court here.

Peter was arrested in 2017 in connection with the investigations.

8. Court to decide on June 16 if Isa Samad needs to enter defence in Felda CBT case



KUALA LUMPUR: Former Felda chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad will know whether he has to enter his defence on 10 counts of graft charges involving RM3mil on Tuesday (June 16).

High Court judge Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali is set to deliver his decision at the end of the prosecution's case at 10am.

High Court deputy registrar Mahyudin Mohmad Som confirmed the matter when contacted on Monday (June 15).

The prosecution closed its case on Jan 14 after 15 days of hearing with 22 witnesses taking the stand.

On Dec 14, 2018, Mohd Isa claimed trial at a Sessions Court here to a charge of criminal breach of trust and nine counts of receiving graft involving more than RM3mil.

According to the first charge, the former Umno vice-president allegedly committed CBT by approving the purchase of Merdeka Palace & Suites Hotel without the approval from the Felda board of directors on April 29, 2014.

The offence under Section 409 of the Penal Code carries a jail term of between two and 20 years, whipping and a possible fine upon conviction.

Mohd Isa was also charged with receiving bribes of RM100,000; RM140,000; RM300,000; RM250,000; RM500,000; RM500,000; RM300,000; 500,000; and RM500,000 totalling RM3.09mil from Gagasan Abadi Properties Sdn Bhd director Ikhwan Zaidel between July 2014 and December 2015.

He allegedly committed the offences at level 49, Menara Felda, Platinum Park, No. 11, Persiaran KLCC near here.

The charges under Section 16(a)(A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 carries a jail term of up to 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the value of the bribe for each charge, if found guilty.

He is currently out on a RM800,000 bail.

9. RM26mil credited legally into Yayasan Akalbudi's trustee account, say witnesses



KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama): Nine bank officers told the High Court here that 40 monetary transactions totalling RM25,952,770 received by Messrs Lewis & Co as the trustee of Yayasan Akalbudi belonging to Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi via cheques and demand drafts were lawful.

The nine witnesses from various banks were Mar Sai Chin, 49; Lina Zailan, 32; Lau Ai Mai, 46; Suzaliza Kamari, 44; Sharifah Shifah Syed Zainol, 56; Mohd Zulkarnain Ab Latiff, 40; G.Jayachantran, 42; Au Lai Ban, 51; and Wong Shiau Phing, 44.

They said this during cross-examination by defence counsel Haziq Dhiyauddin Razali who represented the former deputy prime minister, on whether the transactions seemed strange or illegal.

However, another witness, Yusri Md Kasri, 49, also a bank officer, only replied "I do not know" when asked the same question on the 21st day of Ahmad Zahid's corruption trial on Monday (June 15).

All the witnesses also agreed with the lawyer that the transactions carried out at Maybank, CIMB Bank, RHB Bank, Public Bank and Hong Leong Bank were common procedures in which the information was duly recorded with nothing concealed, and is traceable.

During the re-examination by DPP Harris Ong Mohd Jeffery Ong, the witnesses agreed with his suggestion that their response to the transactions being lawful was based on documents provided in court.

Earlier, the witnesses told the court that the cheques had been received from three individuals and six companies, namely, Cergas Murni Sdn Bhd, HRA Teguh Sdn Bhd, MY EG Sdn Bhd, Chia

Bee Enterprise Sdn Bhd, Kiosk Solutions Sdn Bhd and MTM Networks Sdn Bhd, between March 29,2016, and March 26,2018.

Ahmad Zahid, 67, is facing 47 charges, with 12 of them involving criminal breach of trust, eight for corruption and 27 for money laundering.

10. Zahid's brother paid RM5.9mil for bungalows using cheque from Yayasan Akalbudi's trustee

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama): The High Court here on Tuesday (June 16) heard that Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's younger brother, Datuk Seri Mohamad Nasaee, bought two bungalows in Country Heights, Kajang, worth RM5.9 million using a cheque from Messrs Lewis & Co, a trustee of Yayasan Akalbudi belonging to the former deputy prime minister.

Bee Garden Holdings Sdn Bhd director Tan Sri Lee Kim Tiong @ Lee Kim Yew, 65, who was the 57th prosecution witness, said the cheque was for the payment of the company's two bungalows, which were sold to Yayasan Al-Falah, whose chairman of the board of trustees was Mohamad Nasaee.

He said the bungalows were bought through a check dated Jan 4, 2017 for religious purposes, as they were near the surau.

"Datuk Eric said that the purchase had some connection with religion, but I'm not sure whether it was true or not," he said when responding to additional questions during cross-examination by lawyer Datuk Ahmad Zaidi Zainal.

Ahmad Zaidi: Earlier, you said you know Datuk Zahid (Ahmad Zahid). Did you know that Yayasan Al-Falah, which bought these bungalow lots, had a connection with Datuk Zahid?

Lee: I know.

Ahmad Zaidi: Did you know that the lots will be used for religious purposes, tahfiz or Islamic religious school?

Lee: I don't know what they will be converted into. But I do know that they (Yayasan Al-Falah) bought the land because the bungalows were near the surau.

Lee, who is also the founder and chairman of Country Heights Holdings Berhad, also agreed with Ahmad Zaidi's proposal that the two bungalow units, which were used as showhouses, were sold below the market price due to their poor condition after being left unoccupied for a long time.

"Both homes were sold in 2017, at a price of RM150 psf.

"I agreed to sell one lot for RM3,022,500, which was then adjusted to RM3 million, and another one for RM2,885,250 which then was adjusted to RM2.9 million," he said.

The businessman said the sale and purchase agreement was signed by him and another director of Bee Garden Holdings, Nik Hassan Nik Mohd Amin on behalf of the seller while Mohamad Nasaee was the buyer's representative.

During re-examination by Deputy Public Prosecutor Ahmad Sazilee Abdul Khairi, the witness agreed with the suggestion that the reduction in prices of the bungalows had nothing to do with the fact that they were located near the surau as raised by the defence.

For the 26th charge, Ahmad Zahid is accused of having been involved in money-laundering, that is having given instructions with regard to the purchase of two bungalows for RM5.9 million using a cheque belonging to Messrs Lewis & Co.

Ahmad Zahid is facing 47 charges, with 12 of them involving criminal breach of trust, eight for corruption and 27 for money laundering involving tens of millions of ringgit of funds belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi.

11. MACC arrests company director for forging claims



PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has arrested a company director believed to have submitted claims for work that was not done.

The 43-year-old, a Datuk, is said to have submitted claims totalling RM58,000 to an MP's service centre.

According to sources, the suspect is a special adviser to a Johor member of parliament.

"He had submitted claims to supply food for the constituency's open house. However, the event never took place," said a source.

The claims were supposed to have been made in 2019.

The suspect was arrested on Tuesday (June 16) evening and will be remanded on Wednesday (June 17).

MACC Kuala Lumpur director Razaliah Abdul Rahman, when contacted, confirmed the arrest.

12. 'I did not pressure Ambrin'



Temperature check: Najib arriving at Duta Court Kuala Lumpur for the PAC trial.

KUALA LUMPUR: Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa has denied ever threatening or pressuring for the audit report on 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) to be amended, the High Court heard.

The former Chief Secretary to the Government said he and former 1MDB chief executive officer Arul Kanda Kandasamy had never threatened then Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang, whom he said he had known for almost 40 years, to amend the report.

The witness said this during cross-examination yesterday by counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah in the joint trial of Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Arul Kanda, dubbed the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) trial.

Shafee: Did you, Arul, or anyone there, threaten Ambrin to amend the report pertaining to 1MDB? This seems to be the cornerstone of our case.

Ali: There was no threat. I did not pressure Ambrin to amend or tamper with it.

Ali said a meeting he called for on Feb 24, 2016, on Najib's instruction, took place in a cordial manner.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the National Audit Department, the Attorney General's Chambers and 1MDB to discuss amendments to the draft report. The witness said the meeting had agreed to remove four items from the draft, namely two conflicting 1MDB financial statements in 2014; 1MDB's agreement with Country Groups Securities Thailand; fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho's name in one of the board's meetings; and an issue related to the issuance of Islamic Medium Term Notes.

To another question, Ali said after the meeting, Ambrin appeared normal and not upset as he walked him to the door.

The court had heard from another witness, audit director Nor Salwani Muhammad, that her boss Ambrin appeared upset after the meeting with what had transpired during the discussion.

Shafee also asked Ali about Nor Salwani's action in discreetly placing a recorder in a pencil case during the Feb 26 meeting.

The witness said nobody had asked his permission to record the meeting's discussion.

"At that time, no one in the room knew there was a recorder. It would be unethical," he said.

Najib is accused of using his position to order amendments to the 1MDB final audit report before it was tabled to the PAC to avoid any action against him.

He allegedly committed the offence in Putrajaya between Feb 22 and 26, 2016. Arul Kanda was charged with abetting Najib at the same place and time.

The hearing before Justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan continues today.

13. Zahid paid RM1.42mil in cash for bungalow renovation, witness tells court



KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama): Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had paid RM1,424,643.40 in cash to a contractor for renovating a bungalow in Country Heights, Kajang, which was purchased by the former deputy prime minister's brother, the High Court was told Thursday (June 18).

Contractor Marzuki Che Omar, 56, said he received the cash payments from Ahmad Zahid at Surau An Nur, Country Heights, Kajang during Subuh or Zohor prayers.

"I went to Surau An Nur when told that Zahid would make a payment. I confirm that there was no written contract for the renovation works.

"I did not issue any receipts for the payments received. I received only verbal instructions from Zahid. The transaction was done based on trust. I did not enquire where the money came from, but I confirm that all the payments I received were in cash, handed over by Zahid himself," he said.

He said Zahid had informed him that the bungalow renovation was to enable old folks to learn about religion under Yayasan Al-Falah.

He said this while reading from his witness statement during examination-in-chief by deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Sazilee Abdul Khairi on the 23rd day of the trial of Zahid, who is facing 47 criminal breach of trust, corruption and money-laundering charges involving funds belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi.

On Wednesday (June 17), the 66th prosecution witness, Faisalludin Mohamat Yusuff, told the court that Zahid contributed RM5.9mil to Yayasan Al-Falah, where his brother Datuk Seri Mohamad Nasaee Ahmad Tarmizi was a member of the board of trustees, to purchase two

bungalows in Country Heights, Kajang, using a cheque from Messrs Lewis & Co, a trustee of Yayasan Akalbudi belonging to Ahmad Zahid.

When asked by Ahmad Sazilee on the completion date of the bungalow renovation, Marzuki said work on Lot 403 bungalow began around September 2018 and was completed in the second week of February 2019.

"The date for the handing over of the key was March 30, 2019 and the bungalow had looked abandoned and unkempt (before the renovation)," he said, replying to Ahmad Sazilee's question on the bungalow's key hand-over date and its condition prior to the renovation.

Replying to a question from lawyer Haziq Dhiyauddin Razali, who was representing Zahid, on whether the witness agreed that the bungalow has a huge space for learning or praying, he said, "Agree, there were carpets and 'saf' arrangement to perform prayers."

Marzuki, the managing director of Tekad Nusantara Sdn Bhd, also agreed with Haziq Dhiyauddin that there were rooms to rest and that the layout was similar to that of a madrasah.

For the 26th charge, Zahid is alleged to have instructed the purchase of two bungalows for RM5.9mil using a cheque belonging to Messrs Lewis & Co, which was income from illegal activities.

Meanwhile, the prosecution's 71st witness, Mohamed Husein Mohammad Annifah, 30, an employee of a money exchange company that belongs to Omar Ali Abdullah, told the court that his employer (Omar Ali) had instructed him to go to Hong Leong Bank in Jalan Imbi to convert RM100,000 cash into two bankers' cheques.

"I was given cash amounting to RM100,000 in a bag by Omar Ali in the office. At the bank, I filled out details of my name, identification card number and mobile number. In the recipient space, I wrote Lewis & Co as instructed by Omar Ali," he said.

For the 27th charge, Zahid is accused of having committed money-laundering by instructing one Omar Ali to convert for him a cash amount of RM6,885,300.20, which was income from illegal activities, into 30 cheques that were given to Messrs Lewis & Co for the opening of Maybank fixed deposit accounts.

Zahid is facing 47 charges, with 12 of them involving criminal breach of trust, eight for corruption and 27 for money laundering involving tens of millions of ringgit of funds belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi.

14. MACC investigating public university subsidiary over asset purchase

ALOR SETAR (Bernama): A subsidiary of a public university is being investigated by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) over alleged misappropriation of funds in connection with an asset purchase in 2017, say sources.

According to a source, the purchase of the asset in the Klang Valley and related additional allocations totalled more than RM50mil, and the asset was no longer functioning as usual.

"The MACC went to the office of the company on Thursday (June 18) to retrieve some documents.

"The asset purchase and additional allocations were allegedly not referred to and approved by the Finance Ministry," said the source.

The source also claimed that several board members of the company were being investigated for their alleged role in renovations of the asset.

Kedah MACC director Datuk Shaharom Nizam Abd Manap, when contacted on Saturday (June 20), confirmed that MACC was investigating the matter.

"The case is being investigated under Sections 16, 17, 18 and 23 of the MACC Act 2009," he said but declined to elaborate.

15. IGP: We are not giving up the hunt for Jho Low, other 1MDB fugitives



KUALA LUMPUR: Bukit Aman is not giving up on the hunt for Jho Low, says Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador.

The Inspector-General of Police said the police are geared up to bring Jho Low - whose name is Low Taek Jho - back to face justice.

Abdul Hamid said he had tried to bring back Jho Low last year but failed.

"I had said I would work towards that goal. I admit that I failed but that doesn't mean I have stopped the effort to bring him back," he said in a recent interview.

The country's top cop maintained that the police know where Jho Low is hiding but certain constraints prevent them from bringing him back.

"Lately, there was a report in a foreign news agency that claimed he is supposedly in Kuwait but it was actually in 2016. If he is really brave, he should come out of his hiding place," said Abdul Hamid.

Abdul Hamid said he would not give up the hunt for Jho Low, former SRC International Sdn Bhd managing director and CEO Nik Faisal Ariff Kamil and several others who conspired to steal from the country.

He said the police are working quietly to recover the stolen funds as well as to bring back the fugitives Jho Low.

Abdul Hamid also refuted claims by people that claimed that Jho Low has lots of money and could silence him by offering him bribes.

"I cannot be bought as my mission is to serve the country and the people. The effort to bring him to justice continues," he vowed.

Abdul Hamid previously said he aimed to bring Jho Low back to the country by the end of last year in connection with the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal.

He also lamented the fact that authorities encountered difficulty in doing so and expressed frustration over lack of cooperation with the foreign country that Jho Low was currently hiding in.

He chided the country for its "lack of sincerity" in making it tough for the Malaysian police to get Jho Low, adding that he had reached out to his counterpart in that country but to no avail.

"We wrote to them a few times and even met them, but they have not been sincere with us. We told them that we have information that Jho Low is in their country but they refused to even acknowledge the fact," he had said previously.

Jho Low, Nik Faisal, Eric Tan Kim Loong, Casey Tang, Jasmine Loo Ai Swan and Geh Choh Heng have been wanted by the authorities since 2015.

16. Ex-court employee pleads not guilty to CBT of over RM200k

IPOH (Bernama): A former civil servant pleaded not guilty at the Sessions Court here to 94 counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT) involving RM204,070 eight years ago.

K. Kai Kan Chana, 41, who was then an administrative assistant (finance) at the Sessions/Magistrate's Court here, pleaded not guilty to all 94 charges when they were read to her in front of Judge Norashima Khalid on Monday (June 22).

The charge sheet stated that Kai Kan Chana was entrusted with government assets and receipts which she dishonestly misused or disposed of.

Kai Kan Chana, who was asked to go on early retirement on Nov 1, 2018, is accused of committing the offences for transactions beginning April 5, 2012 until Oct 25, 2012.

She was charged under Section 409 of the Penal Code which is punishable by a maximum 20 years imprisonment, caning and a fine although she would be spared the rotan if convicted as women cannot be caned under civil laws.

The prosecution was handled by Perak prosecution director, Azhar Mokhtar, and assisted by deputy public prosecutors Waffy Ismail dan Nazreen Zabrudin while the accused was represented by Ranjit Singh.

Taking into account health factors, in which the accused has to undergo monthly psychiatric treatment, the prosecution offered RM67,345 as bail amount.

Ranjit then pleaded the court for the amount to be reduced to RM20,000, but Norashima set bail at RM1,000 for each count and ordered for Kai Kan Chana's passport to be impounded, and fixed July 28 for case re-mention.

17. Woman claims trial to 94 CBT charges

IPOH: A former Ipoh lower courthouse finance administration assistant has claimed trial to 94 charges for criminal breach of trust involving a sum of RM204,070.

K. Kai Kan Chana, 41, pleaded not guilty after the charges under Section 409 of the Penal Code were read to her before Sessions Court judge Norashima Khalid here yesterday.

According to the charge sheet, the accused, who was entrusted with the monies, had committed the offence at the courthouse between April and October 2012.

If convicted, she could be jailed up to 20 years, fined and whipped.

In appealing for a lower bail, lawyer Ranjit Singh Sandhu said his client was still seeking psychiatric treatment for a major depressive disorder.

"I understand from her husband that she needs to seek treatment every month.

"She 'retired' in November 2018 due to health reasons and does not have steady income," he said.

"She has also pledged to report to the nearest police station or meet other requirements."

Norashima set bail at RM1,000 for each charge and ordered Kai to surrender her passport.

Deputy public prosecutor Azhar Mokhtar appeared on behalf of the prosecution.

18. Thirteen Kemaman Risda staff fined for making false claims

KUALA TERENGGANU (Bernama): Thirteen Kemaman Rubber Industries Smallholders Development Authority (Risda) staff were fined between RM1,000 and RM6,000 each for making false claims two years ago.

Judge Jamaludin Mat meted out the fines Thursday (June 25) when they pleaded guilty to the alternative charge of using forged documents to make false accommodation and travel allowance claims in 2018.

In passing the sentences, Jamaludin reminded them of the importance of earning income through legal means.

"Even a cent earned through illegal earnings may have a disastrous effect. Even though the amount involved in the case was small, the act could later be questioned in the hereafter.

"I was the son of a settler who earned only RM600 a month and who needed to raise eight children.

"I hope all of you will change, and if you appear before me again, I would give you a heavier sentence," he said.

All of them paid the fines.

Meanwhile, another Kemaman Risda employee, who claimed trial to the same offence, was allowed bail at RM3,000 in one surety and set July 19 for mention.

A resort owner pleaded guilty to abetting one of Risda's employees involved in the case by handing over a fake receipt despite knowing the accused did not stay in the premises.

The offences were committed at the Kemaman Risda office in April 2018.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission prosecuting officer Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin, who appeared for the prosecution, urged the court to impose a deterrent sentence as a lesson to all the accused.

"It is all about integrity. If civil servants are not honest, sooner or later the department will collapse.

"I am confident that this case will serve as a lesson to them and others not to commit the same offence again," he said.

All the accused were represented by counsel Mohd Hayyatuddin Muhamad.

19. Prasarana chairman, Dr Wee discuss about development of railway system in Malaysia



PETALING JAYA: Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong received a visit from the chairman of Prasarana Malaysia Bhd to discuss on the railway system in the country.

The Transport Minister said the meeting with Datuk Seri Tajuddin Abdul Rahman at his office in Putrajaya had touched on the direction of Prasarana.

"In our meeting, we had the opportunity to exchange our views on the direction and challenges of Prasarana Group in the development of the railway system in Malaysia, especially in the post-Covid-19 era.

"At the same time, I had also updated Datuk Seri Tajuddin on the negotiation status of the Johor Baru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS)," said Dr Wee in a Facebook post on Monday (June 29).

Earlier this month, it was reported that the bilateral discussions on the RTS link project had been extended by three months.

Dr Wee had said many economic and social sectors had been adversely affected as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, including those in Malaysia and Singapore.

The bilateral discussions on the Johor Baru-RTS link project had been extended by three months to July 31 from the previous April 30 deadline.

20. Former 1MDB CEO admits in court he fell for Jho Low's ruse



Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi.

KUALA LUMPUR: Former 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) CEO told the High Court he had fallen for a ruse set up by fugitive financier Low Taek Jho, or better known as Jho Low, in the scandal involving the sovereign wealth fund.

Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi, who was cross-examined by lead counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, said it was Low's "speciality" in making people feel comfortable that he (Low) was acting in their best interest.

Shafee was asking the witness about Brazen Sky Ltd, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) which was set-up on July 12, 2012, for the purpose of repatriating 1MDB's money.

In Shahrol's witness statement, he said Brazen Sky was established as a transit to bring back the investment from Petrosaudi Oil Services Ltd which operated in Venezuela.

Shafee: Why was the company created? Why can't you just let the money return to 1MDB?

Shahrol: The reason that Jho Low explained to me was because the market was unfavourable to liquidate all of the units at once, so he proposed we do it bit by bit (gradually).

Shafee: But in hindsight, you now know that this was untrue, and the fund was being managed by Jho Low.

Shahrol: Yes.

The lawyer suggested that the company was set up to give the appearance that some money was coming into Brazen Sky as a part of Low's "ruse".

Shafee: Jho Low's specialty is making people believe they are receiving money that is legitimate.

Shahrol: In short, his specialty is in making people comfortable that he was acting in their best interest and that the money was legitimate.

Shafee: In a way, you yourself have taken up the ruse set up by Jho Low.

Shahrol: Yes.

Shafee suggested that his client, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, was also duped by Low, to which Shahrol said he could not comment.

The witness also insinuated that Low was the "shadow director" of 1MDB and not the former prime minister.

To a question by Shafee, Shahrol said that he was not involved in the decision-making and transaction on repatriation of 1MDB's investment, but rather giving the directive to 1MDB's lawyer, Jasmine Loo.

He said he acted on instructions and action plans given by Low, as he believed that the instructions came directly from Najib.

Shafee: I am very perplexed by this. Contrary to the prosecution's case, what you have testified is that Jho Low is the shadow director of 1MDB, and not my client. Everything Jho Low said, you carried it out.

Shahrol: Because I believed that he was acting on behalf of the shareholder (Najib).

Shafee: But you never checked with the shareholder.

Shahrol: There were one or two occasions.

Shafee: One or two, but many things you didn't check.

Najib, 67, is facing four charges of abusing his position to obtain gratification totalling RM2.28bil in 1MDB funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same money.