

NEWS PAPER CUTTING ON JULY 2021
THE STAR

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'Datuk' faces graft charges involving RM16mil

GEORGE TOWN: A Datuk is expected to be charged with corruption involving RM16mil at a Sessions Court in Butterworth.

It is believed that the man, a board of directors' chairman for a real estate company, was arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission for allegedly accepting bribes and valuables estimated at more than RM16mil.

According to sources, he had allegedly accepted bribes from a director of a developer company in return for appointing the developer's company for a joint venture project carried out on a cooperative-owned land for development purposes.

He is expected to face more than 160 charges under the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act and the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act collectively in Penang and Kuala Lumpur.

He is also expected to be charged at a Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court on Thursday.

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State spending under spotlight

Former exco explains decision to pay RM75,000 for agreement in Lim's graft trial

By JO TIMBUONG
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KUALA LUMPUR: Curveball questions from the prosecution in Lim Guan Eng's corruption trial seemed to throw the defence off-guard as the hearing entered its fourth day.

Deputy public prosecutor Wan Shaharuddin Wan Ladin posed the questions as the case's third witness, Datuk Lim Hock Seng, read from his witness statement.

One of the questions pertained to a multi-million ringgit project on a plot of land, known as Lot 702, which was developed by a third party known as Ewein Zenith Sdn Bhd after the land was given in exchange for completing a feasibility study for the Penang undersea tunnel project.

Wan Shaharuddin first asked Hock Seng, who is a former Penang state executive councillor if he knew who owned the company.

"To my knowledge, I know it is owned by a Datuk. I don't know his full name nor am I aware of the spelling," he said yesterday.

Wan Shaharuddin then asked if Hock Seng had heard of the City of Dreams development on that plot of land and Hock Seng replied he was aware of the development.

He then asked Hock Seng if he knew whether the project followed the density requirement to which Hock Seng replied he did not know.

Ewein Zenith is a joint venture vehicle between Ewein Land Sdn Bhd and Consortium Zenith Beijing Urban Construction Group Sdn Bhd (CZBUCG).

CZBUCG was renamed Consortium Zenith Construction (CZC) in 2018.

Ewein Zenith is headed by Datuk Ewe Swee Kheng and the company's luxurious City of Dreams freehold development, measuring 3.67 acres (1.49ha) is opposite Penang's famed Gurney Drive.

Wan Shaharuddin also asked Hock Seng why the state government decided to spend RM75,000 to get another law firm to draw up an agreement titled "Preliminary Agreement for the Privatisation of the Major Roads and Tunnel Projects in Pulau Pinang", when he had earlier stated that the project should not cost the state government anything.

Wan Shaharuddin: If the state legal adviser was involved, wouldn't the state have saved RM75,000?

Hock Seng: Yes, but it would have taken a longer time to complete.

Hock Seng added that the state legal adviser was not involved in drafting the project's preliminary agreement as the state govern-

ment wanted it completed as soon as possible.

The questions seemed to rile Guan Eng's defence lawyer, Gobind Singh Deo who asked about their relevance to the case.

"What is the relevance of the City of Dreams? And then asked about the RM75,000 ... I need to know exactly what they are charging my client with so we can prepare our defence. What are the particulars of this charge?" he asked.

However, the prosecution team stood by its questions saying that while it covered a lot of ground, it was within the four walls of the charges against Guan Eng.

Sessions Court judge Azura Alwi then told Gobind to hand in case authorities on his objections before fixing Aug 16 to 20 for the trial to continue.

This was Hock Seng's third day on the witness stand reading from his witness statement, which contained matters discussed at state exco meetings dating back to around 2011 including decisions surrounding the undersea tunnel project.

He is expected to continue reading his witness statement when the trial continues on Aug 16 as the prosecution said there was a little bit more to go.

Guan Eng, 60, is facing four corruption

charges involving the construction of an undersea tunnel and paired roads project in Penang.

For the first amended charge, the Bagan MP is charged with using his position as then Penang chief minister to corruptly receive RM3.3mil to help a company owned by Datuk Zarul Ahmad Mohd Zulkifli to secure the undersea tunnel and paired roads project in Penang worth RM6,341,383,702.

The offence was allegedly committed between January 2011 and August 2017 at the Penang chief minister's office.

For the second amended charge, Guan Eng is charged with soliciting 10% of profits from Zarul to help the company be appointed for the same project.

Guan Eng was charged with committing the offence near The Gardens Hotel, Lingkaran Syed Putra, Mid Valley City here in March 2011, between 12.30am and 3am.

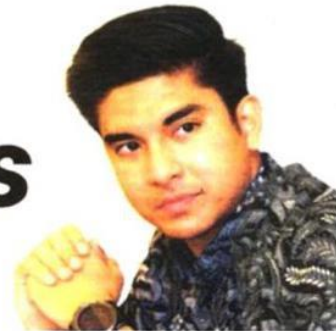
The former finance minister was also charged with two counts of causing two lots of land owned by the Penang state government worth RM208.8mil to be disposed of by the developer linked to the undersea tunnel project.

The offences were allegedly committed at the Penang Land and Mines Office, Komtar on Feb 17, 2015, and March 22, 2017.

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Syed Saddiq to face CBT charges

Former minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman will face accusations of misappropriating RM1.2mil of political party funds. > See report on Page 3 by MAZWIN NIK ANIS and TARRENCE TAN



Syed Saddiq to be charged

He allegedly misappropriated over RM1mil of party funds

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS and TARRENCE TAN
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PUTRAJAYA: Former youth and sports minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman will face two charges of criminal breach of trust for allegedly misappropriating an allocation of over RM1mil meant for a political party.

The Muar lawmaker is expected to be charged under Sections 403 and 405 of the Penal Code at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court in Jalan Duta at around 9am today.

The case is believed to involve around RM1.2mil belonging to the political party he was formerly with.

Syed Saddiq was then the Armada (Youth) chief of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia but had since left the organisation.

"The former minister is also expected to be charged under the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act at the Johor Baru

Sessions Court sometime soon," said a source yesterday.

Investigations by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) against Syed Saddiq, 28, had been conducted since June last year following reports of cash amounting to RM250,000 that went missing from his possession.

The MACC had called several individuals, including Syed Saddiq, to have their statements recorded over the case.

Earlier, he claimed that the cash, which had gone missing from his home in Petaling Jaya, belonged to him and his parents.

At 10pm yesterday, Syed Saddiq posted a tweet and video in which he declared that "truth will always prevail", adding: "It is in moments like this that I am reminded why I joined politics."

Referring to the court charges, he said: "Bring it on!"

The opposition MP claimed to have been

threatened into joining Perikatan Nasional.

These threats had been going on for a year and "renewed" again with the Dewan Rakyat scheduled to reconvene on July 26, he said.

"Every time there is an important vote in Parliament, the threats will come. In July, December, January and recently a week before Parliament reconvenes," he said.

In a statement, Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (Muda) secretary-general Amir Abd Hadi said its co-founder Syed Saddiq would be charged over the raising of funds for the 14th general election at a dinner in 2018.

"The abuse of funds as claimed is a malicious allegation and it is also untrue," said Amir.

Syed Saddiq and 12 others are also challenging the action of the Home Minister and the Registrar of Societies for having yet to decide on their appeal to register Muda as a political party.

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Another district officer held in graft probe

KUALA LUMPUR: Another district officer and a quantity surveyor were detained by graft busters in connection with a project cartel syndicate involved in several multi-million ringgit projects.

Sources said the duo were detained at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) headquarters in Putrajaya on Friday night after their statements were recorded.

Both suspects have been remanded for five days after magistrate Shah Wira Abdul Halim granted the

remand application at Putrajaya Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Sources revealed that the duo were in cahoots with the contractor's company, which is part of the cartel syndicate raking in projects worth tens of millions of ringgit in four Selangor districts since 2012.

"In the space of four years in a district, the contracts obtained from various projects were worth about RM20mil.

"Investigators believe about 70 companies were used to obtain the projects, including 16 companies

owned by family members, while the remaining were owned by cronies and proxies," sources said yesterday.

Sources added that the contractors involved would treat the officers involved, including bringing them to play golf or sponsor their overseas trips.

"The district officer, who was remanded on Saturday, is believed to have received RM125,000 worth of bribes in the form of cash, house renovation, deposit for car purchases, and medical expenses.

"The bribes were in exchange for helping the companies owned by the contractors to obtain various tenders, including for cleaning and maintenance in Selangor, worth about RM3mil," sources said.

Meanwhile, the quantity surveyor was suspected of receiving 1% of the project cost as well as RM90,000 cash and a bicycle worth RM3,000.

"The suspect is believed to have leaked information on the tenders for cleaning and maintenance work in another district in Selangor to the contractor," sources added.