

CONTENT OF DAILY NEWS MAC 2021

BIL.	DATE	NEWS	PAGES
1.	02.03.2021	Manager Charged with making false Claims For Wage Subsidy	2
2.	06.03.2021	'Firms That Paid Zahid had no Business Activities'	3
3.	09.03.2021	'No Consent For withdrawal' – Charity board in the dark about RM17.9mil, court told.	4
4.	30.03.2021	Penang EXCO Members To Testify At Lim;s Trial	5

The Star | 2 Mac 2021 | Page: 8

Manager charged with making false claims for wage subsidy

SEREMBAN: A 39-year-old human resources manager has claimed trial at the Sessions Court here to a charge of submitting a false claim involving RM6,000 for the government's wage subsidy programme.

Wong Siow Yen pleaded not guilty to the charge before judge Madihah Harullah yesterday.

She allegedly committed the offence on April 9 last year at YTG Logistic and Trading Sdn Bhd in Gemas.

The accused had allegedly submitted the names of five employees to the Social Security Organisation (Socso) although they were not entitled to the subsidy amount-

ing to RM6,000.

Wong was charged under Section 18 of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009, punishable under Section 24(2) of the same Act.

MACC prosecuting officer Nor Syarina Raizan urged the court to set bail at RM20,000.

However, defence counsel for the accused Chuah Shyue Chein appealed for a minimum amount as Wong's income had been badly affected due to the Covid19 pandemic and she had to provide for her four young children.

Madihah then fixed bail at RM8,000 with one surety and fixed April 9 for the next mention.



Facing the law: Wong (centre) being escorted to the Sessions Court in Seremban.

The Star | 6 Mac 2021 | Page: 14

'Firms that paid Zahid had no business activities'

Witness: Company had a registered address at an apartment and no staff

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court here has been told that despite not carrying out any business activities, there were large cash withdrawals and deposits made to the bank account of a company allegedly involved in Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's corruption case.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigating officer Mohd Zamri Abdul Rashid, 36, said his investigations found that the company, Berani & Jujur Trading, with a registered address at an apartment unit, had no employees and did not carry out any business activities.

"Financially, I found the company's account was too active with large withdrawals and deposits. According to the Companies Commission of Malaysia, the company is involved in the agriculture and textile businesses.

"Further investigation and the raid on the premises (apartment) found that there was no sign of such a textile business being carried out," he said in reply to deputy public prosecutor Ahmad Sazilee Abdul Khairi on the 47th day of the trial of the former deputy prime minister.

Mohd Zamri, who is the 92nd prosecution witness, said that two other companies allegedly involved in the case, Jogabonito Jewellery & Diamonds and Mastoro Kenny IT Consultant & Services, both with a registered address at an apartment unit, were also found to have not carried out any business activities.

On the 11th, 12th and 13th charges, Ahmad Zahid was accused of having accepted bribes

from Mastoro Kenny IT Consultant & Services in the form of a cheque worth RM250,000 belonging to Jogabonito Jewellery & Diamonds, 13 cheques totalling RM8mil belonging to Mastoro, and 10 cheques totalling RM5mil belonging to Berani & Jujur Trading.

All of the cheques were allegedly received by Ahmad Zahid through Junaith Asharab Md Shariff using a Maybank account belonging to Messrs Lewis & Co said to be as gratification for himself as the then Home Minister to help Mastoro secure MyEG projects under the ministry's purview.

Prior to this, the court was told that Messrs Lewis & Co was a trustee of Yayasan Akalbudi owned by Ahmad Zahid.

Asked why he disagreed with the defence counsel's suggestion that he was biased in his investigations into the three companies, Mohd Zamri said his investigations began in June 2018 and he had been able to gather all evidence even if it was obtained after the prosecution took place.

"All the 24 original cheques from the three companies were obtained after Ahmad Zahid was prosecuted because the banks needed time to surrender the original cheques and could only provide the copies first," he added.

Ahmad Zahid, 68, is facing 47 charges, 12 of which were for criminal breach of trust, eight for corruption, and 27 for money laundering involving millions of ringgit of Yayasan Akalbudi funds.

The trial before Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues. — Bernama

The Star | 9 Mac 2021 | Page: 6

'No consent for withdrawal'

Charity board in the dark about RM17.9mil, court told

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court heard that the withdrawal of RM17.9mil from Yayasan Akalbudi funds was a criminal breach of trust because there was no consent from the charity foundation's board of trustees.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigating officer Muhammad Fazli Zulkifli, 36, testified yesterday that the withdrawal from the foundation's Affin Bank account to be transferred into a Maybank account belonging to Messrs Lewis & Co, the foundation's trustee, was instructed by Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

The 93rd prosecution witness was being re-examined by deputy public prosecutor Sazilee Abdul Khairi during the trial of the former deputy prime minister who is facing corruption, abuse of power and money laundering charges involving millions of ringgit in funds from Yayasan Akalbudi.

Last Friday, Fazli told the court that Ahmad Zahid was involved in the withdrawal of RM17.9mil from Yayasan Akalbudi funds for the purchase of shares as well as to be placed as fixed deposits.

Of the amount, he said RM8.6mil was paid to Ri-Yaz Assets Sdn Bhd as a deposit for a share purchase with RM9.3mil to be placed as fixed deposits.

Sazilee: Based on your investigation on Messrs Lewis & Co, the holder of RM17.9mil, who gave instructions with regard to the money to the firm?

Fazli: All instructions received by Lewis & Co were from Ahmad Zahid, and Lewis & Co will not act without instructions.

The witness also confirmed that no other member of Yayasan Akalbudi's board of trustees had given instructions to Lewis & Co, specifically its partner B. Muralidharan.



Ongoing case:
Ahmad Zahid arriving at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur.
— ART CHEN/
The Star

On Ahmad Zahid's cautioned statement to the MACC involving the investment in Ri-Yaz Assets, Fazli said it contradicted the testimony of other witnesses.

"Based on Ahmad Zahid's statement, he said Yayasan Akalbudi was interested in investing (in Ri-Yaz Assets) in the hotel sector, but the testimony from other witnesses said that Datuk Nurul Hidayah (Ahmad Zahid's daughter) was interested in making an investment and that payment was made by Yayasan Akalbudi," said Fazli.

Sazilee: What about the testimony of Tan Sri Rashid Manaf (shareholder of Ri-Yaz Assets)?

Fazli: According to Rashid, Nurul Hidayah

expressed interest in investing in Ri-Yaz Assets.

Asked whether there was any document on the investment, Fazli replied: "No, it involved only two parties, Nurul Hidayah and Rashid."

"During the investigation, I also did not find any document saying that Nurul Hidayah was an observer or proxy in Ri-Yaz Assets," he added.

Ahmad Zahid, 68, faces 47 charges, 12 of it for CBT, eight for corruption and 27 for money laundering involving tens of millions of ringgit of funds from Yayasan Akalbudi.

The trial before judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah continues on Monday. — Bernama

The Star | 30 Mar 2021 | Page 12

Penang exco members to testify at Lim's trial

By NURBAITI HAMDAN
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KUALA LUMPUR: Several Penang exco members will be called up to testify in the trial of former chief minister Lim Guan Eng, who is facing graft charges involving the state's undersea tunnel project.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin told the press that the exco members would be among the 125 witnesses likely testifying for the prosecution.

"The prosecution has also handed over all documents relating to the case to the defence:

"The documents that were handed over included phone forensic

reports, financial analysis reports from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and expert reports on the projects involved," Wan Shahrudin said when met after a case management before Sessions Court judge Azura Alwi here yesterday.

He also informed the court that the prosecution had handed over the list of potential witnesses to the defence as well as a copy to the court.

Lim, who is represented by lawyer Sangeet Kaur Deo, was exempted from attending yesterday's proceeding.

Previously, the court fixed June 8 to 11, July 12 to 16, July 28 and 29,

Aug 16 and 20, Sept 6 to 10, Sept 20 to 24 and Dec 13 to 17 for hearing.

According to the first amended charge, Lim allegedly used his position as a public servant to receive RM3.3mil as an inducement to help the company of Datuk Zarul Ahmad Mohd Zulkifli secure the undersea tunnel project valued at RM6.3bil.

Lim is alleged to have received the bribe in his capacity as then Penang chief minister at his office in the Komtar building in George Town, Penang, between January 2011 and August 2017.

The second amended charge is for soliciting gratification from Zarul Ahmad to help the company

secure the project.

The alleged bribe was in the form of 10% of the profit that would be made by the company.

Lim allegedly committed the offence near The Gardens Hotel at Lingkaran Syed Putra, Mid Valley City here in March 2011.

He is also facing two counts of misappropriation of property for causing two plots of land belonging to the state government worth RM208.8mil to be disposed of by two companies linked to the undersea tunnel project.

He allegedly committed the offence at the Penang Land and Mines Office in Komtar on Feb 17, 2015, and March 22, 2017.