

# Isa Samad sentenced to six years' jail for graft

The former Negri Sembilan menteri besar and Felda chairman is also fined RM15.4mil for soliciting bribes. He has been allowed a stay of execution pending appeal. > See report by NURBAITI HAMDAN on page 2



## Judge: It was 'undeniable'

### Isa involved in soliciting more than RM3mil, rules court

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad's solicitation for bribes was "activated" by his use of the word salam (greetings) through his former special officer, says the High Court here.

Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali, who found the former Felda chairman guilty of nine counts of graft, said it was undeniable that Isa was involved in soliciting more than RM3mil as kickback to approve Felda's purchase of a hotel in Kuching.

"The request (for bribe) is 'activated' by the accused's salam to Gegasan Abadi Properties Sdn Bhd (GAPSB) board member Ikhwan Zaidel through his former special officer Muhammad Zahid Md Arip.

"The first time this happened was just after the sales and purchase agreement of Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites (MPHS) was signed and the accused signed a payment order of RM16mil or 10% of the purchase price of MPHS to GAPSB," the judge said in his decision here yesterday.

All this was subsequently followed by the same "salam" from Isa for the next eight transactions, Justice Nazlan added.

"In all nine situations, Muhammad Zahid (the 21st prosecution witness) would hand over the money to the accused when they met at the

Felda chairman's office.

"All this, the court has found that none of the defence witnesses was able to dispute," he added.

Justice Nazlan said Muhammad Zahid's testimony was corroborated by the testimony of Ikhwan (the 16th prosecution witness) as the person who gave the bribe.

"The testimony clearly showed the intention of the money was to be handed over to the accused," he added.

Isa was charged with nine counts of dishonestly receiving gratification for himself, in cash totalling RM3,090,000 from Ikhwan, through Muhammad Zahid, as gratification for helping to approve the purchase of the hotel by Felda Investment Corporation for RM160mil.

All the offences were said to have been committed at Level 49, Menara Felda, Platinum Park, No. 11, Persiaran KLCC near here between July 21, 2014 and Dec 11, 2015.

On the issue of Muhammad Zahid's credibility, the court found no reason for the witness to implicate the accused other than to reveal the truth over the bribes received through him.

"The witness had been the accused's special officer from 2011 until 2016. There was no testimony by the accused to say he had any problems with his ex-special officer throughout that period.

"The accused agreed that the witness was his subordinate who would

carry out his instructions," Justice Nazlan added.

He said Isa's defence was an afterthought, inconsistent and merely a denial without justification.

Prior to sentencing, he took note of the accused's background, administrative record and his political involvement, where the accused had been a menteri besar for two decades and also a Federal Cabinet minister.

"Corruption is a cancer on society that threatens the economy and the country's democratic system," Justice Nazlan added.

The court then sentenced him to six years' jail for each of the nine counts and fined RM15.4mil in default of 18 years in jail for all the charges.

The jail sentences were ordered to run concurrently, which means it is a total of six years in jail.

Isa's lawyer Datuk Salehuddin Saidin asked for a stay of execution on grounds that Isa was elderly.

Deputy public prosecutor Afzainizam Abdul Aziz objected, arguing that Isa had not shown any exceptional circumstance that could warrant a stay.

The court, however, granted a stay of execution pending an appeal but ordered for bail to be increased from RM800,000 to RM1.5mil.

The judge also ordered Isa to report to the police station on the first day of each month until the disposal of the appeal, and for him to post bail by 2pm today.

#### Recent high profile convictions

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Datuk Seri Najib Razak became the first former prime minister to be convicted and sentenced to 12 years' jail and fined RM210mil by the Kuala Lumpur High Court for involvement in the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal.



■ Dec 21, 2020

Former Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor convicted and sentenced to 12 months' jail and fined RM2mil by the Kuala Lumpur High Court for involvement in a RM2mil corruption case.



■ Feb 3, 2021

Former Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar and Felda chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad convicted and sentenced to six years' jail and fined RM15.4mil by the Kuala Lumpur High Court for graft involving more than RM3mil relating to a hotel purchase in Sarawak.



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