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| Headline   | Mahdzir may be charged over solar panel project next year |             |                     |
| MediaTitle | New Straits Times   |             |                     |
| Date       | 01 Dec 2018   | Color       | Full Color          |
| Section    | Local News  | Circulation | 36,278              |
| Page No    | 6   | Readership  | 108,834             |
| Language   | English   | ArticleSize | 157 cm <sup>2</sup> |
| Journalist | N/A   | AdValue     | RM 5,391            |
| Frequency  | Daily   | PR Value    | RM 16,173           |



#### AWAITING CLEARANCE

## Mahdzir may be charged over solar panel project next year

**PUTRAJAYA:** Former education minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid is expected to be hauled to court next year to face charges related to the scandal involving a hybrid solar panel project for rural schools in Sarawak.

It is learnt that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is awaiting clearance to charge Mahdzir, who is Padang Terap member of parliament.

"He is expected to be charged next year," a source told the New Straits Times Press yesterday.

Mahdzir, who is Umno vice-president, was called up again to the MACC headquarters here yesterday for another round of questioning. Mahdzir arrived at 9.15am and left at noon.

He was grilled for eight hours by MACC over the hybrid solar panel project on Thursday.

He was alleged to have solicited and received millions of ringgit as



*Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid*

part of the RM1.25 billion contract for the project to install solar photovoltaic panels, and the operation and maintenance of diesel generators in schools in rural Sarawak, which were secured via direct negotiation with the Education Ministry.

The case for both offences of soliciting and receiving kickbacks is being investigated under Section 16(a)(A) of the MACC Act 2009, which carries a jail term of up to 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the value of the bribe, upon conviction.

Apart from Mahdzir, other individuals were expected to be charged for allegedly soliciting kickback from Jepak Holdings Sdn Bhd managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin.

On Nov 15, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the wife of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, was charged with two counts of soliciting RM187.5 million and receiving RM1.5 million for the solar panel project.