

SINGAPORE 457

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3 jailed over \$124k graft case linked to ex-embassy official

Bribes relate to sale of performance bonds involving hiring of Indonesian maids here

Wong Shiying

Three Singaporean men were sentenced to jail yesterday for their role in a \$124,000 corruption case involving a former labour attache of the Indonesian embassy here. Most of the offences, which were committed in 2018, involved bribing the embassy official in exchange for accreditation to sell performance bonds linked to the hiring of Indonesian maids here. Abdul Aziz Mohamed Hanib, 66,

was sentenced to 17 months' jail; James Yeo Siew Liang, 50, to 13 months in jail; and Benjamin Chow Tuck Keong, 58, to one month. In addition, Abdul Aziz was fined around \$18,300, and Yeo \$21,360. The trio were convicted in April. The labour attache, Mr Agus Ramdhany Machjumi, has left his Indonesian embassy post and is no longer in Singapore. Ms Ratna Lestari Harjana, the embassy's head of information and socio-cultural affairs, told The Straits Times that Mr Agus' case is being criminally investigated by the In-

donesian police in Jakarta and that he will face the legal system under Indonesian law. "His case is still an ongoing process with cooperation between the Indonesian police, Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) and the Singapore Police Force." In February 2018, the embassy here required all employers of Indonesian maids to buy a performance bond to ensure that they follow the terms of the embassy-issued employment contract. At the time, employers had to pay a \$70 premium for a bond guaranteed from insurers approved by the embassy. They had to pay \$6,000 if they breached the contract. Agents of the accredited insurers received 45 per cent of the pre-

mium for each bond. Mr Agus was then in charge of issuing the accreditation to insurers. He directed Abdul Aziz, then a freelance translator, to look for insurance agents who would agree to share the commissions collected in exchange for accreditation. Abdul Aziz approached his friend Mr Samad Salim, who then roped in Chow, the corporate development director of a company dealing with organic products. Chow later found Yeo, who was then an insurance agent representing AIG Asia-Pacific Insurance and Liberty Insurance. Yeo's name can no longer be found on the General Insurance Association of Singapore's website. Without the knowledge of AIG

and Liberty, Yeo shared his commissions, which totalled about \$124,000, with the other men. According to court documents, he kept more than \$21,000 and gave Abdul Aziz a similar amount. Mr Agus received over \$72,000, while Chow and Mr Samad each obtained about \$5,000. It was not mentioned in court yesterday if there is a case against Mr Samad. Yeo and Abdul Aziz were each convicted of 18 corruption charges. Chow, who helped introduce Yeo to Abdul Aziz, was found guilty of one charge of abetting Abdul Aziz to solicit gratification. Abdul Aziz was also convicted of attempting to seek bribes for Mr Agus in March 2018 from a Tokio

Marine Insurance Singapore representative. The offer was not taken up. Yesterday, the CPIB said it has been in touch with the Indonesian authorities about the case. sywong@sph.com.sg

(From top) Abdul Aziz Mohamed Hanib was sentenced to 17 months' jail; James Yeo Siew Liang to 15 months in jail; and Benjamin Chow Tuck Keong to one month. In addition, Abdul Aziz was fined around \$18,300, and Yeo \$21,360.

Chingay project raises funds to support ex-drug offenders, families

Gena Soh

To prepare for Chingay this year, 150 participants of different races came together in a project to make 1,000 sticks of eco-friendly bunga manggar. These decorations are a traditional feature of Malay weddings, symbolising prosperity and the hope that the couple will have many children. The bunga manggar, usually made of thin bamboo sticks and colourful paper strips, were created with recycled and other eco-friendly materials, as part of #MESRACHingay2021, a series of activities organised by the People's Association Malay Activity Executive Committees Council (Mesra) for Chingay 2021. They were then put together into colourful poles for the "Adopt a Bunga Manggar" project. This was to raise funds for programmes of the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (Sana). Sana's programmes assist families of drug offenders and former offenders. They also help former offenders reintegrate into society. Twenty poles were put up for adoption at \$500 each over March

and April. Now, the adopted bunga manggar poles have been placed in an installation at Wisma Geylang Serai titled "Colours of Harmony: Celebrating our Culture". The installation was unveiled by Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State for Home Affairs and National Development, yesterday. He said: "This effort requires a lot of support from the community and the success of this initiative signals a resounding yes (from the community) to this process of rehabilitation." A cheque of \$5,000 was presented to Sana at the event. Mr Abdul Karim, the executive director of Sana, said: "I'm thankful because this is an initiative taken by Mesra, and this is a period of time when we need more support. This shows that the community cares a lot and really wants to come forward to help others." One of the volunteers, retiree Lucy Ho, 72, said: "I got to learn something new and make new friends. I could learn about this culture, and keep my brain active." The installation will be showcased till Sept 17. genasoh@sph.com.sg

Minister of State for Home Affairs and National Development Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim (right) and Madam Amatul Jameel Suhani Sujari, chairman of the People's Association Malay Activity Executive Committees Council, viewing a display of bunga manggar at Wisma Geylang Serai yesterday. PHOTO: JASON QUAH

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