



Abdul Aziz Mohamed Hanib (left) is alleged to have received more than \$92,000 in bribes from insurance agent James Yeo Siew Liang, who was introduced to him by Benjamin Chow Tuck Keong (right). ST PHOTOS: WONG KWAI CHOW

# Trio charged over bribery involving embassy employee

**Case linked to bond guarantees for maids but Indonesian Embassy not complicit, says CPIB**

**Shaffiq Alkhatib**

Three Singaporeans, including an insurance agent, were charged in the State Courts yesterday over their alleged roles in a bribery case linked to performance bond guarantees for Indonesian maids.

Freelance translator Abdul Aziz Mohamed Hanib, 63, is accused of collecting more than \$92,000 in bribes for himself and Mr Agus Ramdhany Machjumi, an administrative and technical staff member at the Indonesian Embassy.

In a statement, Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) said Abdul Aziz, a Singaporean, allegedly received \$71,200 from insurance agent James Yeo Siew Liang, 47. The alleged offence took place between March and June this year, court documents said.

It was purportedly a reward for Mr Agus to show favour to AIG Asia Pacific Insurance and Liberty Insurance, two firms Yeo represented.

Court documents stated that as a result, the Indonesian Embassy accredited both insurance companies as performance bond providers.

Abdul Aziz, who was charged with 19 counts of corruption yester-

day, allegedly also received for himself another \$21,400 in bribes from Yeo, who faces 18 charges for similar offences.

Besides the \$71,200 Abdul Aziz allegedly took for Mr Agus, the court heard that the translator had also tried but failed to seek bribes from other parties in March for the embassy employee.

In its statement, the CPIB said the Indonesian Embassy was not complicit in the corruption offences.

The CPIB added: "There is currently no evidence to suggest that AIG Asia Pacific Insurance and Liberty Insurance were complicit in the corruption offences.

"No charges are currently being tendered against them."

The Straits Times had reported that since April this year, employers hiring a new Indonesian maid have been asked to purchase a performance bond guarantee from insurers approved by the embassy, which requires a one-off \$70 payment.

Under the terms of the bond guarantee, employers have to pay \$6,000 if they breach a standard employment contract issued by the Indonesian Embassy.

The sum is first paid by the insurer to the embassy. Employers will then have to repay the sum to

the insurers upon demand.

ST had reported that the embassy can demand the sum, without requiring proof that any breach of its standard employment contract for domestic helpers has occurred.

Court documents showed that Abdul Aziz allegedly started seeking bribes last year related to accreditation to sell the performance bonds. He was then introduced to Yeo in October last year by Benjamin Chow Tuck Keong, 55, a Singaporean corporate development director of a company that deals with organic products.

Chow was also charged yesterday with one count of abetting Abdul Aziz to commit the offences.

The Indonesian Embassy told ST that Mr Agus had left his post "a while back".

An embassy spokesman said: "We are taking the case seriously because we will not tolerate any misconduct. Our authority is also seeking to collaborate on mutual legal assistance in accordance with law and regulations of both countries."

The three Singaporeans were unrepresented in court yesterday.

Abdul Aziz and Yeo were each offered bail of \$50,000, while Chow's bail was set at \$10,000.

They will be back in court on Dec 17. For each count of corruption, offenders can be jailed for up to five years and fined up to \$100,000.

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