

**'KJ's name also suggested to help revive rail project'**

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**By Hafiz Yatim**

A former chief executive officer of Hong Leong Credit Bhd, Seow Lun Hoo, told the Kuala Lumpur High Court today that he had suggested several names, including that of Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin, to help revive the RM12 billion double-tracking railway project.

The project was awarded to MMC-Gamuda Joint Venture Sdn Bhd on Oct 21, 2003, before former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad retired.

abdullah ahmad badawi najib razak pc change portfolio 170908 06However, the project was shelved in December 2003 during Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's tenure as prime minister.

Seow made this proposal to Gamuda Bhd managing director Lin Yun Ling when Lin approached him sometime in February 2006 to seek his help to revive the project.

"Lin approached me to find 'well-connected' individuals with the top leadership to revive the project which was shelved.

"I suggested a few names - namely Khairy Jamaluddin, who is the son-in-law of the prime minister and also Scomi Bhd chief executive officer Shah Hakim Zain.

"I cannot remember the other names," Seow told the court.

"I suggested their names as they have connections with the top leadership and have relationships with ministers, senior secretaries-general (of ministries), government servants and also government agencies.

"Lin approached me to seek help with well-connected persons who would help strengthen the revival bid of the project."

Replying to question during cross-examination by Ranjit Singh, who appeared for MMC-Gamuda, which was awarded the project revival, the witness vehemently denied suggestions that it was he who approached Lin.

Seow, 63, is the second witness in the trial of a RM360 million suit brought by NR Sistem Sdn Bhd, a nominee company of Seow, along with Shah Hakim and Mansur Ghazali, who is a person with experience in the railway industry.

NR Sistem, Shah Hakim, Seow and Mansur filed the suit against MMC-Gamuda for breach of agreement in paying the amount for their help in reviving the project and also implementing system works for the project.

'Seow knew Syed Mokhtar Al Bukhary'

Seow also concurred with Ranjit that he knew Syed Mokhtar Al Bukhary, who has a majority stake in MMC.

Ranjit: Do you know that Gamuda also has several infrastructural projects?

Seow: Yes.

Ranjit: Do you know that Syed Mokhtar's MMC was awarded the Tanjung Pelepas project and Senai

airport, among others?

Seow: Yes.

Ranjit: Would it be wrong to say that Syed Mokhtar is also well-connected to the top leadership?

Seow: I do not know. Lin came to me to suggest several names for help to revive the project, and I suggested Khairy and Shah Hakim.

Ranjit: Why did you suggest Khairy?

Seow: He is the son-in-law of Badawi (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi)

Ranjit: This is the same PM who cancelled the project?

Seow: Yes.

Ranjit: You also suggested Shah Hakim and is it because he had links with Scomi where Kamaludin Abdullah (Pak Lah's son) has a majority stake?

Seow: Yes.

Ranjit: Is this done on purpose or is it merely a coincidence?

Seow: Coincidence.

Yesterday, Shah Hakim testified that MMC-Gamuda acquired NR Sistem as it could provide the "technical expertise" and "networking capabilities" to revive the double-tracking project.

Presentation made to EPU

Scomi has experience in urban infrastructural development, especially in the development of the monorail and the light rail transit systems.

cpps mid term review forum 240408 effendi norwawiContinuing his testimony in the afternoon, Seow agreed that the presentation MMC-Gamuda made to the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of the Economic Planning Unit, Effendi Norwawi (left), that led to the project's revival was not prepared by NR Sistem.

He agreed that Mansur had told him MMC-Gamuda totally lacked the expertise to conduct the project when it was awarded the contract in 2003. However, he could not provide details, saying this question should be posed to Mansur

Seow also said he had scribbled on a piece of paper the abbreviation NR, which referred to north railway (the Ipoh to Padang Besar route) and led to the starting up of the Northern Rail project.

Seow totally disagreed with a suggestion by Ranjit that the initial 'S' he had also scribbled on the paper meant 'Scomi', to which Shah Hakim is attached.

In their statement of claim, NR Sistem and the three plaintiffs say Lin approached them, representing MMC-Gamuda, to revive the project on a private finance initiative basis. Lin invited Seow to form a consortium comprising NR Sistem to undertake the system works.

NR Sistem then took steps to revive the project by meeting the minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of the Economic Planning Unit, the then transport minister and the managing director of Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd.

Meanwhile, MMC-Gamuda in its statement of defence denies there was an agreement reached between Lin and NR Services to undertake system works for the project to be revived.

The two corporate giants deny that NR, along with Shah Hakim, liased with the government and held meetings with it to revive the project. They also deny the notion that MMC-Gamuda lacked the necessary expertise and knowledge to undertake the project.

The hearing before Justice Rosilah Yop continues tomorrow.

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