

Senior EC officer claims trial to bribe charge

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By Hafiz Yatim

A senior Election Commission officer claimed trial in a sessions court in Kuala Lumpur today to accepting a bribe of RM80,000 from a travel agency to hire its vehicles for use by independent foreign observers in the 13th general election.

Muhammad Firdaus Mohd Ramli, 34, who is the EC's Data Analysis secretary, was jointly charged with committing the offence with Fizal Kamaruddin, the operations manager of private company Mega Lavendar Sdn Bhd.

They are accused of accepting the RM80,000 from Mohd Nor Mokhid of Syarikat Southair Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd at Restoran Al Rawsha on Jalan Kampung Pandan in Kuala Lumpur about 1pm on Oct 16 last year.

Jail of up to 20 years if convicted

If convicted for the offence under Section 24 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act, Muhammad Firdaus and Fizal stand to face up to 20 years in jail and five times the amount of the bribe.

The two were represented by Sallehuddin Saidin, while MACC deputy public prosecutor Mohd Sophian Zakaria prosecuted.

Sophian asked for bail to be set at RM20,000 with one surety for each of the accused, saying this was a serious case of corruption and involved a huge sum of money.

Sallehuddin argued for bail to be set at RM5,000 each. He also said Muhammad Firdaus had assisted in the investigations and that he was an Administrative and Diplomatic Service officer.

He also said Muhammad Firdaus is married and has two children, while Fizal has a son who is undergoing chemotherapy as he was suffering from leukaemia.

"Bail is only to secure their attendance in court," Sallehuddin said.

Sessions judge Rozilah Salleh fixed bail at RM10,000 each and also set July 10 for further mention of the case..

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