

**Siti Hasmah recalls when a bribe was RM10**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016**  
**Koh Jun Lin**

Corruption has always existed in Malaysia, although never on a grand that it is today, according to the wife of former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali.

She said that her 18 years in the civil service, she was offered a bribe on two occasions.

“I’ve never even heard of the word ‘*rasuah*’ (bribery). It was in the 70s then.

“It is not only now that corruption is taking place, no. I was there before, but it was nothing like today,” she told a meet-and-greet session in Putrajaya today.

On the first occasion, she said she was serving as a registrar at a maternity ward in Kedah.

At times, the women would have complications in labour and had been given blood transfusions.

This was done free-of-charge, although their husbands and relatives would be invited to donate their own blood to help replenish the supply, if they are able to do so.

On that day however, a man approached her to offer RM10 that was purportedly for blood for his wife’s transfusion, even though the service was free.

She said she was shocked at first, and then she got angry and wanted to scold the man.

“Then it occurred to me that someone in the hospital who is in charge of the transfusions has been up to no good.

“I was shocked, then I cried. I said: “Uncle, take the money back. I have no need for it, and the blood has already been given to your wife anyway. Use the money to buy her some food so she could get better instead.”,” she said, while the audience applauded in approval.

She said she couldn't bear to scold the man. Describing him as a simple village folk, she said he probably did not realise that he was being used.

She said she went straight to the hospital chief, one Dr Abu Bakar, to report the incident and urged him to investigate staff at the blood bank.

"That was corruption long, long ago. Nothing as grand as billions and billions of ringgit," she added.

### **Sting operation**

The second incident took place when she was a medical officer in Jitra, Kedah, she said.

She said at the time, Malaysians in the northern states of Kedah, Perlis, Terengganu and Kelantan do not require a passport to visit Thailand, but are required to carry a letter acknowledging them as residents of these states.

She said she was allowed to sign such letters in her capacity as a medical officer.

Then came a letter from Kulim from someone hoping to find a job across the border, and offered her RM50 if she gets the job.

Again to the delight of the applauding audience, she said she took the letter straight to the state health department, and then to the anti-corruption authorities.

She said she was asked by the authorities to help set up a sting operation, and respond to the letter by asking the person to come to her office.

"On that day my drawer was full of recording equipment from the graftbusters. Allah, my heart... I was so afraid because the recorder is over here, and the lady is going to sit next to me and we are going to talk.

"There were people waiting for when she takes out the money and say, 'This RM50 is for doctor,' Then they would come in and arrest her," she said.

She said she agonised over having someone arrested just for trying to get a job. Fortunately however, the issue of bribery was never raised in the conversation.

In hindsight, she said she began to suspect whether the letter is genuine, or is in fact a trap meant to test her integrity.

She urged the audience to be cautious and to be clean, even as "all kinds of things" happen in the rest of the country.

She said she wanted to tell these stories because she forgot to include them in her [recently published autobiography](#).

Today's event was hosted by Mahathir's fan club Kelab Che Det, but Mahathir himself was not present due to illness.

Hasmah said he has been unwell since Friday, but continued his work until she and the family doctor managed to convince him to take the day off. Mahathir had attended a function in Kulim yesterday.

About two weeks ago, Mahathir confirmed discussions were underway to [form a new political party](#), but details are still sketchy.

The former premier had been critical of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's administration, which he accuses of being corrupt. Najib denies wrongdoing.