

Ex-home minister denies existence of political fund
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Former Home Minister Syed Hamid Syed Albar told the Sessions Court here today that he was not involved in approving calling visas for Bangladesh workers for a political fund.

Testifying in the corruption trial of former Immigration director-general Wahid Md Don, Syed Hamid also denied that he had asked his brother-in-law, Syed Abdullah Syed Rahman, to collect money for his political fund.

kuala terengganu by election 140109 syed hamid albarCross-examined by defence counsel V Sithambaram, the former minister also agreed to a suggestion by the counsel that although the division to approve the calling visas was handed over the Immigration director-general, he or his secretary continued to approve such visas if there were applications from employers.

However, he denied that other individuals were involved in the processing of the applications.

He also told the court that he did not know an individual named Sim Guan Yu or a Datuk Low, who were said to have played a role in collecting money for a political fund.

The member of parliament for Kota Tinggi also said that testimony by others during the earlier proceedings of the trial about Wahid allegedly accepting RM60,000 from businessman Low Chang Hian to expedite approval of 4,337 calling visas for Bangladesh workers, was not correct.

'Others could have used my name'

Questioned further about a witness stating that Sim, a businessman, had mentioned that each calling visa would cost RM180 to be approved, Syed Hamid replied: "No."

"I also deny the existence of a political fund for myself as had been stated by witness Burugabudeen Mohamed Ismail whereby he had claimed that my brother-in-law (Syed Abdullah) had told him about it (political fund).

"I also do not dismiss the possibility that certain individuals might have used my name to collect funds for their own interests," he said.

Wahid, 57, is charged with receiving a bribe of RM60,000 from Low to expedite approval of 4,337 calling visas for Bangladesh workers.

He is alleged to have committed the offence at his house in Jalan Lembah Ledang, off Jalan Duta here at 10.15 pm on July 10 2008.

Judge Rosbiahannin Ariffin set Aug 20 for the prosecution and defence to submit written submissions.

- Bernama

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