

'Khir paid RM6m for renovation of bungalow'

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By Rita Jong

SHAH ALAM: Former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo spent more than RM6 million to renovate his bungalow in Section 7 here, three years ago.

The High Court yesterday heard that Dr Khir approached a freelance landscaper, Nasir Ismail, in 2006 with the proposal to turn the bungalow into a mansion with Balinese features. At that time, Nasir, was a bankrupt.

Nasir, who was the third prosecution witness, told the court yesterday that Dr Khir paid him in instalments of between RM250,000 and RM500,000 in cash, as he could not have a bank account as he was a bankrupt.

"In my first meeting with Dr Khir and his wife at the bungalow, we discussed the renovation plans and I told him it would take about one to two years to complete," Nasir said.

"The meeting lasted three hours. Dr Khir and his wife did most of the talking, so I assumed the house was theirs."

He said Ditamas Sdn Bhd director Shamsuddin Hayroni and Datuk Dr Karim Mansor, the Tanjung Sepat assemblyman, were also present. The bungalow was then vacant.

"I asked for an advance payment of RM250,000 to enable me to buy supplies to begin work," said Nasir when questioned by deputy public prosecutor Masri Mohd Daud.

"Dr Khir said he had no problems giving me the advance as long as I could deliver. He paid me in cash."

Nasir then went to the official assignee (now known as Insolvency Department) to get his passport to enable him to fly to Bali to buy the supplies.

He said Dr Khir also appointed Shamsuddin as his manager for the renovation works as he (Dr Khir) was "a busy man".

Nasir, 55, was testifying in the trial of Dr Khir, 45, who is charged with obtaining for himself and his wife, Zahrah Kechik, two plots of land and a house located in Lots 8 & 10, Jalan Suasa 7/1 L here, from Ditamas through Shamsuddin for RM3.5 million, which was much lower than the original price.

Ditamas had bought the lots on Dec 23, 2004, for RM6.5 million.

Dr Khir, who is the assemblyman for Sungai Panjang, allegedly committed the offence at the Selangor menteri besar's official residence in Jalan Permata 7/1, Section 7 here, on May 29, 2007.

Masri: Are you a qualified landscaper?

Nasir: I am interested in landscaping and I read up on it. Tun Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia Boleh, so I felt I could do it.

Masri: Did you know who owned the bungalow?

Nasir: Initially, I thought it belonged to Dr Khir, but on the renovation plans, it was as listed as Ditamas. I was confused.

Masri: How were the payments made to you and by whom?

Nasir: Shamsuddin made four to five payments of RM500,000 in cash each, while Dr Khir made seven to eight payments of RM500,000 each.

Masri: How much did Dr Khir pay you for the renovation in total?

Nasir: More than RM6 million.

He said the works were completed end of 2008. Nasir was declared a bankrupt between 1998 and 2008.

Cross-examined by Dr Khir's counsel, M. Athimulan, Nasir admitted he did not have any document or proof of payment received from Shamsuddin or Dr Khir.

"Only God knows," he said.

Nasir also said he was not the director of his wife's company, Lina Ubersari Bali Landscaping and Pottery, although there were invoices and bills prepared by the company manager stating he was the director. This, he said, was because the manager was confused.

When asked if he had declared the RM2 million which he received from Shamsuddin with the Insolvency Department, the witness said no, and that he did not know that failing to declare this was an offence.

Athimulan: On June 5, 2007, did you have an agreement with Dr Khir stating that the renovation works cost RM600,000?

Nasir: I think so. This agreement was just a formality. The RM600,000 was insufficient.

Athimulan: You had a misunderstanding with Dr Khir, that was why you did not complete the renovation works. Agree?

Nasir: Yes. There were a few minor things which I did not complete. At that time, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission had begun its investigations. There were also people protesting outside the property.

Athimulan then requested for an adjournment to allow Nasir time to look through a document which stated the works carried out and for the witness to inform of the cost of each task he had completed.

Judge Datuk Mohtarudin Baki fixed Monday for hearing to resume.

Proceedings yesterday were initially to resume with Shamsuddin taking the stand, but DPP Abdul Wahab Mohamed informed the court that the witness was unwell.

Proceedings on Wednesday ended abruptly with Shamsuddin on the stand after the witness struggled to answer questions from the DPP and the judge.

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