



PEMANDU
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY UNIT

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Official Launch of Special Corruption Sessions Courts

SHAH ALAM: Under the Government Transformation Programme (GTP), one of the initiatives under the Fighting Corruption NKRA is aimed at speeding up corruption trials, that is, to complete corruption cases within a year.

In light of this, the Special Corruption Courts were officially launched at the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Courts in Shah Alam, by the Chief Justice, The Right Honourable Tun Dato' Seri Zaki bin Tun Azmi on Wednesday, 6 April. Also in attendance at the launch event were Dato' Seri Idris Jala, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and CEO of PEMANDU as well as Datuk Seri Abu Kassim, the Chief Commissioner of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

In the studies conducted for the GTP Roadmap, it was found that lengthy trials and appeals for corruption cases should be minimized as it increases the opportunity for material witnesses to go missing, evidence tampering, as well as factual incorrectness due to witnesses not being able to recall the correct scenarios. Some witnesses would also become tired, frustrated or lose interest in the case, thus becoming uncooperative.

MACC Chief Commissioner, Datuk Seri Abu Kassim agrees with the objective of expediting corruption trials. "This move is a very good initiative as the prosecution cases that MACC builds will have a greater chance of success where less time is taken for the trial to complete."

The creation of more specialised courts helps significantly, because the completion of trials in a shorter time can never mean taking short cuts – all due process and care must still be exercised in court proceedings. These Special Corruption Courts were announced in the 2009 Budget Speech by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, and have now become a reality, beginning operation on February 16, 2011.

The Special Corruption Courts are located throughout Malaysia, namely in Johor Bahru, Ipoh, Seremban, Kuantan, Kuching, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur and Shah Alam.

“We are proud to formally launch these courts today as the operation of these specialised courts will help speed up the processing of corruption cases. In addition to the investigation and charging of corruption offenders, the trial process is a key feature of bringing corruption offenders to justice,” said Tun Zaki, at the launch.

The judges assigned to the Special Corruption Courts are some of the most experienced of their profession, with many of them holding 20 or more years of experience on the bench.

The Special Corruption Courts in Shah Alam and Kuala Lumpur (three each in the two locations) are immediately tasked with processing around 150 corruption cases in total. There were 674 backlog corruption cases at end 2009, but at end 2010 there were only 425 cases that remained pending trial. This is including 446 cases that were registered throughout 2010. In total, 718 cases were processed in the courts last year which already demonstrates the first steps being taken in an expedited trial process.

The judges are also taking further measures to complete corruption cases in a timely manner by carrying out case management, which is critical groundwork for smoother courts proceedings. In specialised corruption courts, the judges will not have to handle a multitude of types of cases and can focus their expertise on corruption cases. The Chief Registrar had also earlier in 2010, issued a circular to all judges to complete all

corruption cases within one year.

The corruption courts have already begun to show an impact, with one of the cases currently on trial being that of a Selangor State Assembly representative who was charged for using falsified documents under s11 (c) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1997.

Mr Ravindran Devagunam, the Director of Fighting Corruption NKRA, PEMANDU said that this was a big win initiative for the NKRA. “Although a lot of initiatives have been carried out under the NKRA, the coming into operation of the courts is particularly significant as it underscores the fact that the Government is tackling corruption seriously and is addressing the issue from all angles.”