



12 SEP, 2026

Academic acquitted of 21 false research fund claims

Borneo Post (KK), Malaysia



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KOTA KINABALU: A university professor was acquitted and discharged by the Sessions Court here of 21 charges of making false claims involving research funds related to Sabah's marine life.

Judge Jason Juga acquitted and discharged Prof Dr Charles Santhanaraju Vairappan, 59, without calling for his defence.

In his reserved ruling, the judge held that the prosecution had failed to establish a prima facie case against Charles on all the charges, including the necessary ingredients of the offences.

Charles was alleged to have submitted documents, including official receipts

containing false details, to officers at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Bursary between May 2014 and April 2017.

The receipts allegedly stated payments ranging from RM300 to RM5,550 for expenses including diving activities, boat charters to several islands and van charters, when no such expenditure had been incurred.

The charges were framed under Section 18 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act (MACC) 2009, punishable under Section 24 (2) of the same Act.

Upon conviction, the offence carries a jail term of up to 20 years and a fine of at least five

times the amount involved or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

The prosecution called 26 witnesses during the trial.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Rustam Sanip appeared for the prosecution, while counsels Zahir Shah, Baldev Singh and Kelvin Wong represented Charles.

Charles claimed trial to all 21 charges on July 20, 2022.





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SUMMARIES

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