

**\$700,000 HOUSING SCAM**

# Lawyer jailed for five years

He is fourth person convicted; the fifth man, lawyer David Rasif, is still at large

■ BY SUJIN THOMAS

A LAWYER who was part of a group which swindled banks and the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board by declaring inflated purchase prices of properties was sentenced to five years' jail yesterday.

David Tan Hock Boon, 40, became the fourth person convicted in connection with the scam, which also involved property agent Goh Chong Liang and fugitive lawyer David Rasif.

Rasif went missing in June 2006 with about \$12 million of his clients' money and remains on the run.

Pleading for leniency, Tan's lawyer Sanjiv Rajan took pains to explain to the court that Goh was the "prime mover", and that Tan was not a "conniving criminal".

He said his client "very foolishly followed Mr Rasif's instruction and engaged in the conspiracy".

Goh was jailed for five years and five months in August last year.

Before Tan was sentenced,



**David Tan Hock Boon was part of group which swindled banks and CPF Board by declaring inflated prices.**

Deputy Public Prosecutor Ong Luan Tze urged the judge to take into consideration that Tan committed the offences while he was a practising lawyer.

She implied that as a lawyer acting on behalf of clients, he should have been held to some professional standards.

Tan, a father of two young children, stopped practising law in April 2006 on leaving Rasif's law firm and became a freelance business development manager.

He was arrested in August 2006 and has been in remand for the last three months because he was unable to raise the \$120,000 bail offered.

Court documents said that the scam involved Goh convincing

sellers and buyers of mainly Housing Board properties to declare inflated purchase prices.

They secured mortgages well above the value of the flats with phoney CPF documents and employment records.

The scam, which started in 2004, put nearly \$700,000 in the pockets of the conspirators in just over a year.

Court documents did not say how the men planned to get away without repaying the loans, although Mr Rajan said Tan received no money from the transactions.

When the Commercial Affairs Department got wind of what they were doing in 2005, Goh asked to have the signatures removed from documents connected to the sale of the flats.

Tan handed over the documents to Goh, who erased his own signatures and replaced them with those of another man, Zurkifli Alang Noordin, who did it in return for money.

Zurkifli was jailed for a year in April.

Another man in the scam, Abu Samah Yacob, was jailed for 17 months in June.

When the hearing was over, Tan was the picture of a broken man - dazed and lost in thought.

His friends offered sympathetic pats on his back as he was led away.

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