

New Straits Times April 2017

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1. Datuk businessman nabbed for graft released on RM100,000 bail



A businessman 'Datuk', who was arrested and remanded over the alleged sale and purchase of plots of land below market price, was released on bail here today.

GEORGE TOWN: A businessman 'Datuk', who was arrested and remanded over the alleged sale and purchase of plots of land below market price, was released on bail here today.

Magistrate's court deputy registrar Ahmad Tajudin Zain allowed the 70-year-old to be released on Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) bail of RM100,000, with two verbal sureties.

He was arrested last Wednesday after appearing at the MACC's office to provide his statement on the case.

His five-day remand order expired today.

The suspect is alleged to have used his position as trustee of a Bumiputera-related local foundation to sell parcels of land to companies to which he is connected, for millions of ringgit.

The lands are said to belong to a subsidiary company of the local foundation.

The Datuk was represented by lawyers Reza Rahim, Ong Yu Shin, B Jeyasingam and N Rajivan.

He was brought to the magistrate's court at about 10.30am today, and after almost one hour, was escorted back to the MACC's office, before being released.

The case is being investigated under Section 23 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 for abuse of power or position for gratification.

2. MITI: Halal industry players need to embrace e-commerce



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed try the Sangkaya ice cream during a visit to a booth at Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) 2017. Looking on are Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) chairman Datuk Dr Noraini Ahmad (right) and chief executive officer Dr Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros (left).

KUALA LUMPUR: The halal industry players must embrace the e-commerce push as the traditional brick and mortars mode of doing business is on its way out, said the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the e-commerce cluster, which made its debut at this year's Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS 2017) will play a more important role going forward.

"As you know, Malaysia has already partnered with global e-commerce giant, Ali Baba Group in the creation of the Digital Free Trade Zone (DTFZ)," he said at MIHAS 2017.

"Earlier today, the Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had launched the world's largest halal toyyiban focused e-marketplace, so that shows how important this segment is to the government."

Mustapa said the e-commerce segment is also very much in line with the government's objective of enriching the local small and medium enterprises (SME) sector.

"As you know, we are targeting to further drive the inclusion of SMEs in global business. We hope to increase SMEs contribution in export to 23 per cent by 2020 from the current 17.8 per cent. By

having a more robust and accessible e-commerce ecosystem, we can help the SMEs to do that," he said.

"The e-commerce agenda will not only be important for us in 2017, but for years to come."

Mustapa said Malaysia is on track towards achieving a global Halal hub status by 2020 backed by a holistic ecosystem from end-to-end.

"We are strong especially in the food and beverage industry as compared to other countries and also have good recognition with our halal logo," he said.

Mustapa is also confident that Malaysia will reach RM15 billion halal investment by 2020 from the current RM11 billion.

The halal market is currently valued at US\$2.3 trillion annually with the halal food sector as its core component, valued at US\$660 billion.

Exports of Halal products for Malaysia in 2016 stood at RM39.3 billion.

Malaysia's halal exports are also projected to contribute 8.7 per cent to Malaysia's gross domestic product by 2020.

3. MACC nabs Lahad Datu police inspector over alleged RM3,500 bribe



MACC nabs KK police inspector over alleged RM3,500 bribe (pix by DATU RUSLAN SULAI)

KOTA KINABALU: A police officer with the rank of Inspector was arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) today for allegedly soliciting and receiving a RM3,500 bribe.

The 37-year-old officer was nabbed at the Lahad Datu police headquarters' traffic office at 11.30am.

The officer is alleged to have solicited and acquired a bribe from a trailer lorry driver as an inducement not to bring him to court following a fatal accident case in Feb 2012.

According to an MACC source, the driver was supposed to have been issued a traffic summons, and there was an order for him to be charged in court after an investigation was carried out.

"However, the officer took the opportunity to ask the lorry driver for a RM3,500 bribe as an inducement so that he would not be charged and sentenced to prison," said the source.

Meanwhile, Sabah MACC director, Datuk Sazali Salbi, confirmed the arrest, adding that the police inspector will be remanded tomorrow to facilitate investigation.

4. Mifa bribery scandal: Low pay, lavish lifestyles may be to blame, says Khairy



Three Malaysian Indian Sports Council-Malaysian Indian Football Association (MISC-MIFA) players were nabbed by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission over alleged bribery. PUTRAJAYA: Low salaries and lavish lifestyles may have been the reasons behind the alleged involvement of three players from the Malaysian Indian Sports Council-Malaysian Indian Football Association (MISC-MIFA) in accepting bribes for match fixing.

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaludin said his views are based on feedback given by Health Minister, Datuk Seri S. Subramaniam, who is also the MIC president, who said the party's football club has neither a huge allocation nor pays high salaries to its players.

"I assume that the club's players were influenced by the lavish lifestyles of other teams' players, and were looking at their high salaries.

"I was also informed that this case might have happened after the club qualified to play in the Premier League this year, and the players began to get attention," Khairy told a press conference after the launching ceremony of the KL2017 Torch Relay here yesterday.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) detained three MISC-MIFA players, including a foreign footballer and a scrap metal shop worker, who allegedly acted as the bookie. The trio is believed to have made thousands of ringgit in bribes.

All the suspects are being detained between six and seven days to facilitate investigations under Section 16(a)(A) of the MACC Act 2009.

Congratulating the MACC for the arrest, Khairy said he is confident that both MIFA and the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) will give their full cooperation to the MACC and the police over the case.

"Let this be a lesson to any player or team... I am confident that only legal action will overcome bribery or the bookie issue," he added

5. Six immigration officers charged in Kuching with bribe-taking

PETRA JAYA: Six immigration officers were charged at Kuching's Special Court for Corruption here today with accepting bribes of between RM100 and RM1,000.

Agnes James Daim, Gracy Bohan, Norhaliza Hussein, Emily Ngayan Beliang, Benjamin Morsit and Khairul Nizam Omar claimed trial to committing the offence between Apr 22, 2016 and Jan 6 this year.

Gracy, 35, and Norhaliza, 33, were slapped with two counts of accepting bribes of between RM100 and RM500 through online money transfer without consideration, from one Fazal Illahi Juma Gul.

The four remaining accused were charged with one count of accepting bribes of between RM100 and RM1,000 through the same method from the same person.

All the immigration officers, aged between 33 and 42, were charged under Section 165 of the Penal Code for offence relating to a public servant obtaining any valuable thing from someone without consideration, for which they can be sentenced up to two years jail or fined, or both.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) prosecution team, comprising Katherine Nais, Ikhwan Mohd Ibrahim and Mohd Asri Abu Mansor, proposed RM10,000 cash bail with two sureties for each of the accused.

The prosecution team also told the court that they may tender 10 to 15 prosecution witnesses during the hearing of the cases.

Agnes, Gracy, Norhaliza and Emily, through their respective counsels, appealed for leniency on the grounds that their clients are civil servants and that they will commit to attending all court proceedings.

Benjamin and Khairul Nizam, who were unrepresented, also pleaded the same.

Judge Nixon Kennedy Kumbong fixed a court bail of between RM5,000 and RM8,000 with one surety for each of the accused.

He also granted a request from the prosecution team for the court to set the hearing date on the pre-trial case management day, which is Apr 28 for all of the accused.

It was reported that 11 immigration officers were arrested by MACC during its special operation to haul up corrupt officers linked to the influx of illegal immigrants in the state last month

6. Datuk Seri and son arrested in connection with Penang land scandal

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) yesterday arrested a "Datuk Seri" and his son to assist with investigations into a land scandal involving Yayasan Bumiputra Pulau Pinang Bhd.

The arrest of the 74-year-old Datuk Seri was made at MACC's office in Penang, while the man's 47-year-old son was arrested in MACC's office in Putrajaya at about 7pm when they showed up to have their statements recorded.

MACC in a statement said the father and son were linked to a leading property developer in Penang, which is also listed on Bursa Malaysia.

"The two suspects are believed to have been abusing their positions and sold lands owned by a subsidiary of the foundation at a lower price, without going through proper process and procedures.

"This has resulted in the losses of millions of ringgit to the subsidiary since several years ago," the statement said.

The arrests were made following an arrest of a trustee of the same foundation on March 29 for allegedly abusing his position for personal gains.

The property developer, based in Georgetown, had developed a number of properties in Penang including Kepala Batas and Tanjung Bungah.

MACC deputy commissioner Datuk Azam Baki, when contacted, confirmed the arrests.

The duo is expected to be taken to Georgetown Magistrate Court today to be remanded.

The case is being investigated under Section 23 of the MACC Act 2009 for abuse of power.

7. Mifa bribery scandal: MACC gets remand extension for suspected bookie

PUTRAJAYA: The remand order for a scrap metal worker, believed to be the bookie for the three Malaysian Premier League footballers, has been extended to five more days.

The extension order, which takes effect tomorrow, was issued by magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman, following a request by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) today.

The order expires on April 17.

The 49-year-old bookie was believed to have offered cash, worth thousands of ringgit, to the three Malaysian Indian Sports Council-Malaysian Indian Football Association (MISC- MIFA) players to fix the matches.

The three players, however, were released on MACC bail of RM50,000 for each.

One of the players is a 29-year-old Argentinian defender. The other two - a goalkeeper and a defender - are locals, aged 26 and 27.

All four arrived at the Putrajaya Magistrate's Court here at 9.20am, clad in orange MACC lock-up t-shirt.

They are being investigated under Section 16(a)(A) of the MACC Act.

The three players were arrested and remanded for seven days since April 6, while the bookie was arrested and remanded for six days since April 7.

MACC's initial investigation revealed the players received bribes of between RM10,000 and RM30,000 from bookies to influence the outcome of matches during this season's Premier League campaign.



The remand order for a 49-year-old bookie has been extended to five more days, while three Malaysian Indian Sports Council-Malaysian Indian Football Association (MISC- MIFA) players were released on MACC bail.

8. Police probe on 1MDB completed, ball now in AG's court



The Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said police have completed the investigations into Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), and have submitted the investigation papers to the Attorney-General's Chambers some time ago. Bernama Photo

KUALA LUMPUR: The Inspector-General of Police today revealed that police have completed its probe into 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), and have submitted the investigation papers to the Attorney-General's Chambers.

Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said police have completed the investigations some time ago.

He was commenting on Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali's orders for the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to wrap up their probe on former 1MDB subsidiary SRC International soon.

Khalid, however, said police are not involved in the investigation on SRC International.

Previously, police had initiated the investigation on 1MDB based on reports from the Public Accounts Committee. Last August, Khalid said the first phase of the report had been completed.

On another matter, Khalid also touched on the proposed debate between Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Abdul Aziz and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"A police station is not a place for debates. They should debate in Parliament," he said, referring to a suggestion that the event be held at the police auditorium in Cheras.

Nazri and Mahathir were supposed to debate last month. However, it was called off as police rejected the application.

After another attempt to hold a debate was rejected by the police, Nazri proposed that it be held at the police auditorium in Cheras.

9. VIP father and son duo remanded over Penang land scandal probe

GEORGE TOWN: A 'Datuk Seri' and his son, a 'Datuk' have been remanded for six days to assist investigations into a land scandal involving Yayasan Bumiputra Pulau Pinang Bhd.

Magistrate Mohamad Amin Shahul Hamid granted the remand application by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) against the duo, aged 74 and 47, respectively, effective today.

Both father and son, clad in orange MACC attire and handcuffed separately, arrived at the magistrate's court here about 10.50am.

They will be investigated under Section 23 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009.

The arrest of the father was made at MACC's office in Penang, while his son was arrested in MACC's office in Putrajaya about 7pm yesterday when they showed up to have their statements recorded.

The father and son were linked to a leading property developer in Penang, which is also listed on Bursa Malaysia.

MACC, in a statement yesterday, said the duo were believed to have abused their positions and sold land owned by a subsidiary of the foundation at a lower price, without going through proper process and procedures, which resulted in the losses of millions of ringgit to the subsidiary since several years ago.

Their arrests were made following the arrest of a trustee of the same foundation on March 29 for allegedly abusing his position for personal gains.

10. Najib: Govt committed to ensuring nation's growth remains steady

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has affirmed the government's commitment towards ensuring that the nation's economic growth remains steady despite global economic uncertainties.

In the latest entry on his blog, NajibRazak.com, titled "Cadangan Hala Tuju Ekonomi Negara" (Proposed Economic Direction for the Nation), he said, the government's policies would be driven by the inclusivity principles, where the less fortunate would continue to receive assistance.

"This is important to ensure that we achieve our vision of becoming among the top 20 countries by 2050, InsyaAllah (God Willing)," he said after his discussion with 28 economic and financial experts on the nation's economic direction in achieving the 2050 National Transformation (TN2050) yesterday.

On the discussion, he said, most of the experts agreed that the focus should be on human capital development and increasing productivity to ensure the nation's readiness for TN2050.

Najib said he was pleased at the positive response to the implementation of the Digital-Free Trade Zone, adding that the suggestion for the government to focus on the provision of digital workforce to ensure that the country was truly ready to become a digital economic hub was well-received.

There were also suggestions for the government to be more aggressive in assisting start-up businesses, he said.

"With regards to the long-term plans, I am intrigued by the suggestion for us to take advantage of our strategic location by becoming a strong economic platform for the emerging markets.

"The government has also been urged to be more open in bringing in foreign experts to ensure that there are no gaps between demand and supply," he said.

Najib also took note of the suggestions from Dr Zulkiply Omar from the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research and Datuk Seri K. Govindan from RAM Holdings Bhd on the agricultural sector towards ensuring sustainable food supplies in the long run.

There were also suggestions that more exhibitions be held to encourage the retail sector's participation in the capital market and the usage of "robo-advisors" in financial management, he said.

"On the whole, I am satisfied with the discussion," he said.

11. Yayasan Bumiputera land scandal: Datuk Seri, 'Datuk' son, released on bail

GEORGE TOWN: A Datuk Seri businessman and his Datuk son, who were arrested in connection with a land sale scandal involving the Yayasan Bumiputera Pulau Pinang Bhd, were released on bail today.

The 74-year-old father was admitted to a private hospital on Friday due to high blood pressure, while his 47-year-old son was kept in lockup since his arrest last Wednesday. Their six-day remand order expired today.

The son was escorted by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officers to the hospital at about 10.50am today.

Magistrate court dep-uty registrar Ahmad Tajudin Zain arrived at the hospital about half an hour later.

He allowed bail of RM100,000, with two sureties, for each of the detainees.

In a statement last week, the MACC said that the duo is believed to have abused their positions and sold land owned by a subsidiary of the Yayasan at a price below market value several years ago, without going through proper processes and procedures, resulting in losses of millions of ringgit for the subsidiary.

Their arrests were made following the detention of a 70-year-old trustee of the Yayasan on March 29, for allegedly abusing his position for personal gains.

The case is being investigated under Section 23 of the MACC Act 2009.

12. MACC gets four-day remand extension on Adam Rosly

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) today was granted a four-day remand extension on Ampang PKR Youth chief Datuk Adam Rosly to facilitate investigation into his wealth.

The 28-year-old man, who had been remanded for five days since April 14, was ordered by magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman to serve his remand extension beginning tomorrow.

Adam is being investigated under Section 4(1) of the Anti-Money-Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act (AMLATFA) 2001.

He found himself at the centre of a controversy over the legitimacy of his wealth, following revelations that he owned a 'castle-like' house and luxury cars despite his young age.

The young 'Datuk' presented himself at the MACC headquarters here at 2.30pm on April 13 and had his statement recorded to assist investigations into his assets.

13. Proposal to improve mechanism on Johor bumiputera property at final stage: MACC

ISKANDAR PUTERI: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will submit proposals to improve the system and procedure related to Bumiputera housing in Johor to the state government by next week.

MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said the commission was in the final phase of completing the proposals, which will address weaknesses in the existing system and procedure related to Bumiputera housing in Johor.

"MACC's Consultancy and Prevention Division studied the weaknesses in the existing systems and procedure which caused corruption and abuse of power.

"We have identified them and we are in the final stage to submit the proposals for improvements to the Johor government to take the necessary action to ensure weaknesses in the system and procedure will be resolved to avoid the issue from recurring.

"...Insya Allah, we will submit the proposals by next week," said Dzulkifli after attending a Corruption Free Pledge ceremony and signing involving Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and nine executive council members in Kota Iskandar here today.

The recent Johor real estate corruption scandal investigated by the MACC inrevealed that the suspects involved may have converted the statuses of Bumiputera quota units into non-Bumiputera quota units in order to sell them at higher prices.

Former state executive council member Datuk Abd Latif Bandi and a property consultant were charged at the Sessions Court yesterday for 33 counts of abetment to receive RM30.3 million in bribes in relation to the case.

**14. Not just Shafie, all related to Mara property scandal will be called in when needed:
MACC**



Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said anyone involved in the Mara Inc's purchase of real estates in Australia will be summoned for questioning and not limited to Shafie, who was the previous rural and regional development minister.

ISKANDAR PUTERI: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will only call up Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal for questioning if there is a need to do so, to assist investigations into a property scandal involving Mara Incorporated Sdn Bhd.

Its chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said anyone involved in the Mara Inc's purchase of real estates in Australia will be summoned for questioning and not limited to Shafie, who was the previous rural and regional development minister.

"We will look at whether there is a need for it in our ongoing investigation. If there is a need, we will call whoever and it will not necessarily be YB (Yang Berhormat) Shafie Apdal.

"Whoever that is related to the case can be required to be called upon and give a statement. It is not necessarily limited to Shafie Apdal," said Dzulkifli when asked if MACC would call up the former minister to assist in the investigation.

He said this after attending a Corruption Free Pledge and signing ceremony involving Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and nine executive council members in Kota Iskandar here today.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said yesterday that 24 people have been called in for questioning and seven premises probed as part of the MACC investigation into the Mara Inc's property purchase case in Australia.

The case was highlighted when Australian newspaper 'The Age' had alleged that a high-ranking Mara official, a senior official and another person had overspent government funds in buying a block of apartments in Melbourne.

It was reported that the trio had overpaid by A\$4.75 million (RM13.8 million) for the apartment block in 2013.

The five-storey apartment block at Dudley International House in Melbourne was bought by Mara for use as a hostel for its students there.

15. Miti aims 10 per cent procurement growth in vendor development programme



Minister of the International Trade and Industry (Miti) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said Miti was also targeting a 10 per cent increase in Bumiputera VDP vendors in providing manufacturing goods and services, which currently numbering 1,440 companies.

KUALA LUMPUR: The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Miti) targets at least a 10 per cent increase in the procurement value under the Vendor Development Programme (VDP) this year from RM4.88 billion in December last year.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said Miti was also targeting a 10 per cent increase in Bumiputera VDP vendors in providing manufacturing goods and services, which currently numbering 1,440 companies.

"To date, we have 21 anchor companies and we hope it can be increased to at least another five quality companies, whether it is government-linked or private-owned companies," he told reporters after attending the Vendor Development Programme Consultation Council (MPPPV) here, today.

Mustapa said in order to facilitate the growth, anchor companies would be given a double tax deduction which had been extended to year 2020 of a maximum claim amounting to RM300,000.

He said the amount could be used to develop the capability of the Bumiputera vendor companies.

"There is also the Bumiputera Vendor Research and Commercialisation Grant where RM9 million has been allocated this year and another RM7.5 million for the Bumiputera Vendor Capacity Building Programme.

"Today we have distributed RM4 million in total to seven anchor companies for the grant namely, Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd and Uzma Engineering Sdn Bhd," he said.

Mustapa said TNB has the most number of vendors with 982 Bumiputera companies which supplied RM1.678 billion worth of procurement value last year.

At the MPPP meeting, he also witnessed the participation of Adabi Consumer Industries Sdn Bhd, Sime Darby Property Sdn Bhd and Sime Darby Plantation Sdn Bhd as new VDP anchors. Of the 21 anchors, 14 are high-performing companies or PCG20 GLC, six local large companies and a multi-national company.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said Miti would co-host the 5th GLC ExploreAce along with UEM Group Bhd, Sime Darby Bhd and the Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Bhd on Aug 8, 2017.

The event will feature business matching, advisory programmes and seminars, which are aimed at increasing the participation of VDP anchors and vendors

16. Petronas seeks to develop field



(From left) Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Ungga Embas, Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg and Petroliaam Nasional Bhd president and chief executive officer Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin after the signing ceremony in Kuching on Saturday. KUCHING:

PETROLIAM Nasional Bhd (Petronas) is in the process of selecting a partner to co-develop its SK316 gas field in Sarawak and not wanting to sell it as reported by some media, said its president and chief executive officer Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin.

"SK316 exercise is to find partners that have the technology to develop and do more explorations in that block and now we are the process of selecting our partners," he said after it was reported that Petronas was considering selling its stake in the SK316 offshore gas block in Sarawak.

SK316 involved high sour gas and high carbon dioxide content, which were of high risk, thus requiring high technology to develop the field, he said at the signing ceremony between Petronas and Yayasan Hartanah Bumiputera Sarawak, here, on Saturday.

Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg confirmed that the state government was consulted on the matter, but said it did not want to take the risk to develop the gas field.

"The project cost billions of ringgit and it is of high risk," he said, adding that the state government practised prudent investments to ensure profitable returns.

17. NGOs demand MACC progress report on Selangor-Splash probe



NGOs demand MACC progress report on Selangor-Splash issue said Suara advisor, Zamil Ibrahim,

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) must reveal the progress of its probe into the Selangor state government's takeover deal of Syarikat Pengeluar Air Selangor (Splash), for the sake of the people.

Representatives from three non-governmental organisations (NGOs) - Pertubuhan Suara Rakyat Marhaen (Suara), Badan Amal Tarbiah Sejagat (Batas), and Pertubuhan Gerakan Penegak Suara Selangor (Gapenas) - handed over a memorandum to MACC officials here today, demanding a swift response to their request.

Suara advisor, Zamil Ibrahim, said it has been six months since the NGOs lodged a report with the commission over the issue.

"We lodged a report with the Selangor MACC on Nov 15 against Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali and Splash, following the (revelation of) discrepancies between the takeover amount stated during Azmin's administration and what was claimed during the tenure of his predecessor, Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim.

"Since then, there hasn't been any response or updates on the matter," he added.

Also present were Gapenas Selangor chairman, Nasiruddin Mahamed, and Batas Malaysia Supreme Council member, Hafarizam Haron.

"The people of Selangor must know that their money is being misused. This is not a small matter, as it involves billions of ringgit," Zamil told reporters after handing over the memorandum here, earlier.

He urged MACC Deputy Chief Commissioner, Datuk Azam Baki, to respond to their complaint as soon as possible.

"If a small fry in Selangor can afford to own a bungalow worth millions, what about those in higher positions. They are still roaming around freely (and pretending to be good people in front of others).

"The MACC must put an end to this culture of abusing the people's money," he added.

Zamil noted that the MACC has yet to call up the three people the NGOs singled out in their previous report.

"We named Splash chairman Tan Sri Wan Azmi Wan Hamzah, Azmin and Khalid in our reports. All three of them have yet to be called for questioning.

"Khalid had been willing to give his statement and facilitate investigations, but even he was never called," he added.

Last year, during the state assembly, Azmin said that Khalid offered RM2.975 billion to take over Splash's equity.

Khalid, however, said the state government under his administration made the offer of RM2.975 billion for the whole corporation, and not for Splash's equity alone.

Khalid claimed that this was much lower compared to the offer made by Azmin's administration

18. Economy on track for 4.5-4.8% growth in 2017: Bank Negara



Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Seri Muhammad Ibrahim

LABUAN: The economy looks well on track to achieving the upper end of the central bank's 4.5-4.8 per cent annual growth projection for 2017, Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Seri Muhammad Ibrahim said today.

Export numbers for the first three months of the year have been good. Exports in Feb, in particular, surged by 26.5 per cent, the fastest pace since 2010.

"If that trend continues, we might see growth gravitate to the higher end of the range," he said at a media briefing here, held to announce the Labuan Financial Services Authority 2016 Annual Report launch.

If there are no unforeseen conditions which may cause the economy or sentiments to be adverse, especially in terms of geopolitical risks, that will also strengthen the upper end growth projection for the economy.

On the interest rate policy, Muhammad said the next monetary policy meeting, which will be held on May 12, will address risks to growth, inflation and financial imbalances.

"At the end of the day, it must be at a level that will promote economic growth... that is very important for us to look at," Muhammad said.

Although inflationary pressures have risen over the past two months, he said the level of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will go down.

But the central bank will still adhere to the 3-4 per cent inflation projection for 2017, until an assessment at a later date.

On the stronger performance of the ringgit, the central bank chief said the improved levels reflect the measures undertaken since Dec.

"We expect the demand and supply of the ringgit to be more balanced than before. It will reflect the strong fundamentals that we have now," he added

19. 49,000 civil servants facing bankruptcy over loans: Cuepacs

KUALA LUMPUR: Over 49,000 civil servants in the country are facing bankruptcy due to poor management of loans, and taking on debts that are beyond their means to repay.

This was revealed by the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) president Datuk Azih Muda, who added that there have even been cases of civil servants forging their salary slips when applying for personal loans from financial institutions.

"This situation is getting more serious," he told reporters after attending the Labour Day Seminar here, today.

He said the absence of a system that monitors loan applications by civil servants is among the reasons why individuals apply for loans beyond their means to repay, or taking on overlapping loans.

"(What is more), the government has (allowed) over 20 credit agencies to deduct from the salaries of civil servants who have applied for loans, without (any of the financial institutions) having to refer to one another. (Civil servants) can borrow from any financial institution by only bringing in their salary slips, and their salaries will be deducted every month.

"There are civil servants who initially apply for a loan with Institution A, then make subsequent applications with Institution B and C (all of which are approved)," said Azih.

In view of the alarming trend, Cuepacs is proposing that the government adopt the system being used by the Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (Angkasa), namely the Credit Reporting System (Spekar).

"This system (would allow Cuepacs to) detect data on salary deduction and the credit (history and rating) of civil servants.