

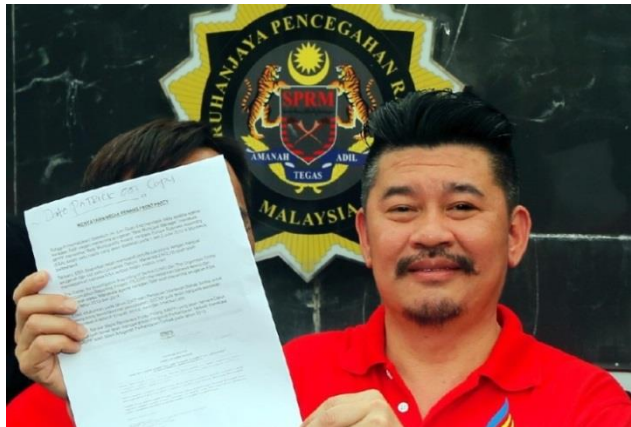
New Straits Times August 2017

No.	Date	Headlines	Notes	Page
1.	1 August 2017	PFP lodges MACC report over Penang councils' fake awards scandal	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	4
2.	1 August 2017	Ex-FIC CEO remanded in probe over London hotel purchase	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	6
3.	1 August 2017	MACC sets up task force to probe discrepancies listed in AG's Report 2016	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	8
4.	1 August 2017	FIC hotel purchase probe: Special officer to ex-Felda chairman remanded five days	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	10
5.	1 August 2017	Fight against corruption must start early	-	12
6.	1 August 2017	Zambry satisfied with performances of gov't department, agencies as per AG Report	Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir	14
7.	2 August 2017	MACC special team to scrutinise AG's Report	MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad	16
8.	2 August 2017	Customs Department rolls out anti-graft tool	-	18
9.	3 August 2017	Action on 895 punitive, corrective warnings based on 2016 AG Report initiated	2016 Auditor-General's Report	21
10.	3 August 2017	Senior Prasarana officer charged with accepting RM70,000 in bribes	-	23
11.	3 August 2017	PAC clears Risa companies of wastage, recommends tighter management	-	24
12.	7 August 2017	Women less inclined to commit fraud: MACC chief	Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission chief commissioner Datuk Zulkifli Ahmad	26
13.	7 August 2017	FIC Kuching hotel purchase probe: MACC to summon key witnesses this week	Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Datuk Zulkifli Ahmad	28
14.	8 August 2017	Two men held in connection with FIC probe released by MACC	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	30

No.	Date	Headlines	Notes	Page
15.	11 August 2017	Two more arrested in MACC swoop on illegal Penang factory	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	31
16.	13 August 2017	Sg Lembu illegal factory probe: Norlela baffled by criticism, says willing to cooperate with MACC	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	33
17.	13 August 2017	Seized bauxite stockpile at RM1.28 billion, most found at Felda Bukit Goh and Kuantan Port	Pahang Mining Operators Association vice-president Yap Soon Huat	36
18.	15 August 2017	Isa Samad arrested by MACC in connection with FIC probe	MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki	39
19.	18 August 2017	Press chances on MACC visiting Sungai Lembu residents in illegal factory investigation	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission	41
20.	20 August 2017	MACC yet to establish link between illegal Sg Lembu factory and Phee's bank accounts	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	43
21.	20 August 2017	MACC freezes Penang exco's bank accounts	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	45
22.	20 August 2017	FGV's Isa freed on half-million ringgit bail	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	46
23.	22 August 2017	Selangor govt welcomes probe by MACC and assured its cooperation	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	48
24.	24 August 2017	MACC to meet witnesses abroad over FIC's London hotel purchase probe	MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki	50
25.	24 August 2017	Peace in Bukit Goh after MACC seizes bauxite stockpiles	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	52
26.	24 August 2017	Four MBI officers called up by MACC to give statements on controversial RM16 million payments	MACC deputy commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki	54
27.	25 August 2017	MACC to net big fish in Sabah	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	56
28.	27 August 2017	MBI remains mum on MACC probe	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	58
29.	27 August 2017	MACC to probe Gatco estate land deal	Chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad	60

No.	Date	Headlines	Notes	Page
30.	29 August 2017	Selangor MB's aide at MACC headquarters over Unisel probe	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	62
31.	29 August 2017	MACC releases Selangor MB aide after 5 hours of questioning	The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)	63
32.	30 August 2017	1MDB remits full debt payment to IPIC before deadline	1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB)	65

1. PFP lodges MACC report over Penang councils' fake awards scandal



The report was lodged by Penang Front Party president Datuk Patrick Ooi at the state MACC office

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Front Party (PFP) lodged a report with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) today to probe claims that two local councils paid for awards from a dubious foreign organisation.

The report was lodged by PFP president Datuk Patrick Ooi at the state MACC office at about 11am.

Ooi wants the MACC to investigate both the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) and the Seberang Prai Municipal Council (MPSP).

He is also urging the graft-buster to investigate Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who endorsed the local councils' participation in the award ceremony, as well as MBPP mayor Datuk Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

"This is most disgraceful and a shame to all Penangites.

"As such, we urge the MACC to thoroughly probe the matter," he said.

Last week, it was alleged that both local councils received awards and recognition from the Europe Business Assembly (EBA), a dubious international organisation.

On March 26, 2013, it was reported that Datuk Pathahiyah Ismail, the then president of the MPPP (before it was upgraded to MBPP), was to receive the Best Municipal Manager award, while the MPPP would receive the Best Municipality Award from the EBA.

In July of that year, Lim had also announced the impending receipt of the awards.

The then MPSP president, Maimunah, received similar awards the following year.

The Times recently reported that the EBA is an Oxford-based organisation selling "fake awards", or more widely-known as "vanity awards".

2. Ex-FIC CEO remanded in probe over London hotel purchase

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has obtained a four-day remand order starting today against Felda Investment Corporation (FIC) former chief executive officer Zaid Abdul Jalil.

He was remanded to assist in investigations into the company's purchase of a high-end property in London.

The remand order against the 46-year-old was issued by magistrate Nik Isfahanie Wan Ab Rahman and will expire on Aug 4.

Handcuffed and clad in an orange lock-up attire, Zaid was brought in a wheelchair to the magistrate's court for his remand hearing at 9.22am.

His lawyer, Fahmi Abdul Moin, said Zaid is suffering from slipped disc and muscle spasms and is currently undergoing treatment at University Malaya Medical Centre's (UMMC).

According to an MACC officer, Zaid is currently serving as the CEO of a government-linked company based in Negeri Sembilan.

He was detained by the commission at 9.30pm last night after 12 hours of questioning.

The arrest was to facilitate investigations into FIC's purchase of a high-end property in Kensington, London, between 2013 and 2015, for a total of £60 million (RM330 million).

FIC is the investment arm of Felda.

His case is being investigated under Section 16 of the MACC Act 2009.

Last month, MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad directed his team to open investigation papers into the hotel deal in London to determine if abuse of power or corruption were involved in the transaction.

Its chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said FIC is believed to have purchased the hotel at a price that was far higher than its original value, which caused FIC to lose millions of ringgit.

On June 22, two senior officials of two companies were remanded for six days in connection with the probe.

The two men - a 36-year-old property unit head of a postal service company and a 45-year-old director of an asset consulting company - are suspected of having manipulated the price and property evaluation of the hotel.



Handcuffed and clad in an orange lock-up attire, Zaid was brought in a wheelchair to the magistrate's court for his remand hearing at 9.22am.

3. MACC sets up task force to probe discrepancies listed in AG's Report 2016



The Sahabat GERAH SPRM initiative, MACC hopes to work with the public closely in addressing corruption and related issues.

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will set up a special task force to investigate findings revealed in the Auditor General's Report 2016 Series 1.

MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said the commission will start investigating the discrepancies detailed in the report.

Dzulkifli said the special task force, set up within the MACC, will investigate if there were any corruption or abuse of power involved in the said findings.

"Based on preliminary assessments, there are issues that need closer scrutiny. I promise that the MACC will look into these issues thoroughly," he said at the launch of the

'Sahabat Gerakan Revolusi Anti Rasuah (GERAH) SPRM' initiative today.

Meanwhile, Dzulkifli noted that today marks his one-year anniversary since he first took up the post as MACC chief commissioner.

"I am very touched to have received support from the public and relevant agencies.

"In a year, much has changed with the landscape of combating corruption in the country," Dzulkifli said, remarking that he had a "rough" start last year when he accepted the appointment.

He said he will continue to lead the MACC through a more aggressive path in making the country corruption-free.

On the Sahabat GERAH SPRM initiative, he said MACC hopes to work with the public closely in addressing corruption and related issues.

"This will be a platform for the public to get involved and get in touch with us, assisting us in investigations to combat corruption in the country and achieving a corruption-free nation status by 2020," he said.

4. FIC hotel purchase probe: Special officer to ex-Felda chairman remanded five days



(File pix) According to his lawyer Muhammad Rafique Rashid Ali, the suspect was picked up from his residence in Kuala Lumpur at 12.30am and was arrested at the commission at 4am today.

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has obtained a five-day remand order starting today against a former special officer to an ex-Felda chairman.

He was remanded to assist investigations into Felda Investment Corporation's (FIC) purchase of a luxury hotel in Kuching, Sarawak.

Magistrate Nik Isfahanie Wan Ab Rahman issued the remand order against the 51-year-old.

The remand will expire on Aug 5.

Clad in orange MACC lockup attire, the suspect appeared calm as he arrived at the Putrajaya Magistrate's Court at 2.20pm.

According to his lawyer Muhammad Rafique Rashid Ali, the suspect was picked up from his residence in Kuala Lumpur at 12.30am and was arrested at the commission at 4am today.

The suspect was the fourth individual brought in to assist the probe into the purchase of the luxury hotel.

His case is being investigated under Section 17 (a) of the MACC Act 2009.

FIC's 2014 purchase of a posh Kuching hotel, comprising 213 guest rooms and apartment suites, had raised suspicions of corruption and abuse of power.

It is believed that FIC paid between RM40 million and RM50 million higher than the actual market value of the hotel.

5. Fight against corruption must start early



Corruption is the abuse of public resources for personal gain. We need a concerted effort to deal with a multi-faceted problem such as corruption. FILE PIC

ASTUDY conducted recently by the Malaysian Institute of Integrity on corruption should be taken seriously. The study involving some 400 local university students found that many of them regarded it as something that is acceptable and not a crime.

The study, which was also aimed at gauging the thinking of the future generation, showed that 36 per cent of respondents felt receiving kickbacks in the form of money and presents was not corruption, while 37 per cent believed making false claims was not wrong. Another 20 per cent thought it was acceptable to offer jobs to relatives over others.

Interesting findings, but quite alarming. Researchers know that many more studies should be conducted to determine the consistency in the findings if we are to accurately evaluate the actual scenario. However, while waiting for more research to be conducted, we can start re-looking at the options to remedy the situation. And, reviewing our understanding of "corruption" and what it means. This can be part of our strategy.

Corruption takes many forms. To some, accepting a *teh tarik* from someone who needs a favour is akin to accepting a bribe of thousands of ringgit. Some people think certain corporate activities are meant to win favours, too, although many would argue that the companies are just giving back to their stakeholders.

In fact, returning favours for some good deeds is part of our culture. Buying lunch and even offering some cash is considered a way to say thank you. If this is the rationale our youth used as

basis in their assessment of corruption, I fear that future research on the matter will yield the same results.

6. Zambry satisfied with performances of gov't department, agencies as per AG Report



Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir is satisfied with the performance of several government departments and agencies as recorded in the first series of the Auditor-General's 2016 Report.

IPOH: Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir is satisfied with the performance of several government departments and agencies as recorded in the first series of the Auditor-General's 2016 Report.

Zambry said in the report, which was issued yesterday, 20 audited departments and agencies in the state, 15 were rated 'Excellent', three were rated 'Good' and two other departments and agencies were rated 'Satisfactory'.

"Among the departments that scored five stars rating were the state Secretary's Office and state Finance Department. Despite receiving a five-star rating from the Auditor-General, there were also weaknesses that need to be fixed immediately.

Zambry said the state will take into consideration most of the recommendations and was pleased that none of the departments were found to be at fault for overspending or abusing their power.

"I hope the Auditor-General's report will be used as a basis to improve weaknesses, strengthen and improve management, and upgrade accountability and integrity and value for every ringgit that the state spends," he added.

He was speaking to reporters during press conference after attending an Appreciation Day for civil servants at [Casuarina@Meru](#) Hotel here today.

A total of 262 retirees were celebrated at the event and each Bumiputra pensioner received an Amanah Saham Bumiputra (ASB) incentive certificate worth RM3,000. As for non-Bumiputera pensioners, they each received a Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) Sijil Simpanan Premium (SSP) of the same amount.

On a separate note, Zambry said the state government would have to wait for the full report from the Veterinary Services Department before the Matang sub-district can be declared free of rabies.

"We can't take this issue lightly as it involves the people in Kuala Sepetang. Let the Veterinary Service Department do their job. They need to comply with the standard operating procedures," he added.

The Perak government declared the Matang sub-district, where the case was detected, as well as Larut and Selama, as rabies-infected areas.

7. MACC special team to scrutinise AG's Report



The Auditor-General's Report 2016 Series 1 contains 353 recommendations to assist the federal government and federal and state statutory bodies to rectify their reported weaknesses

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission is to set up a special team to investigate possible corruption and abuse of power that may have been indicated in the Auditor-General's Report 2016 Series 1 released on Monday.

MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said yesterday the team would scrutinise the report.

"I promise that the MACC will take appropriate action if necessary. From my reading, there are issues in the report that can be scrutinised," he said to reporters after the launch of the 'Friends of MACC' initiative here.

The Auditor-General's Report 2016 Series 1, tabled in the Dewan Rakyat, contains 353 recommendations to assist the federal government and federal and state statutory bodies to rectify their reported weaknesses.

Dzulkifli, who has been MACC chief commissioner for a year, pledged to combat corruption and clean society of the scourge.

"InsyaAllah (God willing), in 2020, there will rise in the country a progressive and bold society that will say 'No' to corruption and the corrupt," he said.

Dzulkifli also said that so far 1,007 people had applied online over the *MACC* website to be 'Friends of *MACC*'.

The 'Friends of *MACC*' initiative was launched on May 8 to endear the *MACC* to the people and provide them an opportunity to work with it to fight corruption and abuse of power.

8. Customs Department rolls out anti-graft tool



Perak Customs personnel taking the corruption-free pledge in Ipoh in March.

KUALA LUMPUR: THE Customs Department has put in place an almost airtight screening system to minimise chances of its personnel engaging in corruption.

The Corruption Risk Management (CRM) system that will be introduced in critical sections of the department, which is one of the country's biggest revenue earners, will also serve to reduce leakages that could have hindered Customs from earning more than it had been able to.

Initiatives introduced under CRM have seen major tweaks to some of the department's age-old systems and procedures.

This includes a "surprise rostering" of personnel in specific areas as well as the introduction of a programme where the levels of integrity of the taxmen are "analysed".

Customs director-general Datuk Seri T. Subromaniam told the *New Straits Times* that he was optimistic that with the new mechanism in place, the department's tax collection could increase by a "few billion ringgit".

"This fully-integrated system prevents personnel from manipulating the current system and procedures. Corruption happens because some of the procedures lack transparency, so they are prone to be manipulated.

"CRM is basically a tool that reviews the processes and procedures to stop corruption and abuse of power.

"Since I assumed this post, we have conducted workshops to identify weaknesses in the processes and procedures," he said, adding that the CRM launched yesterday would be fully operational by year-end.

Subromaniam vouched for CRM's effectiveness, saying that the tamper-proof system, enhanced with an airtight check-and-balance mechanism, heralded a new era for the department's performance.

"If employees try to get around the system, they will find out that it is almost impossible.

"If they try to fail the system, the system will not fail the department."

The CRM also covered an "improved" conventional system, which Subromaniam believed would arrest the perennial problem faced by many enforcement agencies that operated from assigned stations — their officers getting too comfortable and working in cahoots with the bad guys.

For Customs men in such stations, including those manning the country's entry points and ports, the CRM, he said, would see to it that they observed not only a rotational system, but also the "surprise rostering".

"There are cases where certain goods that were coming in and would be taxed RM10,000, for example, but the assessment officer (for reasons known only to him) charged a tax of RM5,000 only.

"Under this rotational system, it will not be the same officer at the same post... The 'surprise rostering' system allows our personnel serving in these critical entry points to know where they will be stationed only when they report for work that day.

"They will also only learn then which importers and agents they will be dealing with that day.

"The upper management will also conduct ground auditing periodically and their assessments, too, will be rechecked by our integrity officers."

He also touched on forwarding agents, including the black sheep among them.

He said these appointed middlemen, serving to facilitate import and export, would also be closely monitored and that they would face the full brunt of the law if they were involved in bringing in illicit consignments.

"Typically, in cases like this, where fraudulent declarations are made, these agents will put the blame on the importers, saying that they had no idea the consignments ran foul of the law.

"How is it possible for these agents to get paid if they do not know who their clients are? Do they think that we are stupid?

"It is extremely important (to improve the procedures), especially with the Islamic State threat. You never know... one day they may attempt to bring in explosives," he said, adding that there had been cases of consignments containing drugs being declared as potatoes and cigarettes as furniture.

On the possibility of Customs men having their palms greased by the agents to close an eye to their illicit imports, Subromaniam said the department would work with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to address such problems.

"One of the key changes that we are making is to make these forwarding agents more responsible in carrying out due diligence. That was why we appointed them in the first place and if they fail to conform, we will cancel their licence.

"We have zero tolerance of corruption. That is our policy and we will not accept this nonsense. There are some bad apples, but they are not the majority."

He said under CRM, Customs personnel, including new recruits, would be compelled to undergo an integrity test.

"We are going to be the first enforcement agency to introduce the Malaysian Integrity Profiling, and we are very happy and proud to do this.

"The module is developed by the Malaysian Institute of Integrity together with the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics Systems Bhd, which will profile the officers, and help identify their integrity level, strengths and weaknesses."

He said new recruits would be posted based on their profiling.

A total of 176 new officers sat the integrity test last Sunday.

9. Action on 895 punitive, corrective warnings based on 2016 AG Report initiated



Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa with Treasury Secretary-General, Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Irwan Serigar (left) during the question-and-answer session at the Media: The Auditor-General's Report Series 1 and jointly organized at Auditorium Complex C, Putrajaya.

PUTRAJAYA: A total of 895 warnings have been issued following the publication of the first series of the 2016 Auditor-General's Report.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa said 103 or 11 per cent were punitive warnings and 748 or 84 per cent were corrective warnings.

Punitive warnings are issued for matters related to embezzlement, abuse of power, misconduct or negligence in the execution of duties, whereas corrective warnings are made to improve the system and procedure.

Based on the first series of the report, Ali said the Public Service Department has initiated disciplinary proceedings against 136 officers out of 103 punitive warnings issued in the report.

"One of the punitive warning issued was on the construction project of Bera Hospital in Pahang," he told a media session on the first series of the AG report today.

Another 32 or 31 per cent other warnings had no elements of fraud, abuse of power, misconduct or negligence and 16 warnings were still being investigated, Ali said.

"Another 35 or 34 per cent warnings are still under investigations while nine other will be investigated by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Agency (MACC)," he added.

Ali said 26 investigation committee were formed to probe the 103 punitive warnings (60 warnings at ministry level and 43 warnings state government level).

Whereas the remaining 44 warnings will be investigated by AG Report Action Committee Meeting which involved statutory body and companies, he added.

Of the 103 punitive warnings, 60 warnings investigated involved 11 ministries.

Under Series 1 of the 2016 Auditor-General's Report, disciplinary proceedings had been taken against 119 officers at ministry level, Ali said.

For the corrective warnings, Ali said out of the 748 warnings, 263 or 35 per cent have been acted on, while 485 (64.8 per cent) were still being processed.

"This is because it will take time for the ministries or agencies involved to carry out corrective measures and improvements.

"Their status will be monitored through National Audit Department Dashboard," he added.

Ali said that since the publication of the Auditor-General's Report from 2012 to 2015, 167 officers had been given disciplinary action including warnings and sackings.

"Another one case is still being investigated by the MACC," he added.

The Auditor-General's Report 2016 Series 1 was tabled on July 31 at the Dewan Rakyat by Auditor-General Tan Sri Dr Madinah Mohamad.

It contained 353 recommendations to assist the federal government, federal statutory bodies and state governments in rectifying identified weaknesses.

Also present at the media session today were Treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah, Public Service Department director-general Datuk Seri Zainal Rahim Seman.

10. Senior Prasarana officer charged with accepting RM70,000 in bribes

GEORGE TOWN: A 54-year-old Prasarana Bhd chief operating officer was charged at a Sessions Court here with accepting more than RM70,000 in bribes.

Mohd Shukri Abdul Rahman claimed trial before Sessions Judge Norsalha Hamzah.

He was charged under Section 17(a) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Act 2009.

Shukri was accused of acting as an agent of Prasarana and taking a RM70,000 bribe from Jayonik MSC Sdn Bhd, which was credited into a Maybank account under the name of Nor Jasmin Mustafa, for issuing a appointment letter to the company for a project worth RM8,404,675.13.

MACC's Ahmad Ghazali Muhamad Nadzri appeared for the prosecution, while the accused was represented by Datuk Shukri Mohamad.

Norsalha allowed bail at RM50,000 and set August 16 for mention.

11. PAC clears Risda companies of wastage, recommends tighter management



KUALA LUMPUR: No wastage or misappropriation were found in the management of companies under the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (Risda).

This was following an audit report done by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) today at Dewan Rakyat.

PAC chief Datuk Seri Hasan Arifin in a statement said the committee was fully satisfied with the explanations given by former Rural and Regional Development Ministry's secretary-general Datuk Seri Ibrahim Muhamad and Risda director-general Datuk Seri Wan Mohamad Zuki Mohamad.

In its suggestions, PAC recommended for the Finance Ministry to provide clear directions and guidelines in helping Risda Bina, a subsidiary to Risda.

"The government especially the Finance Ministry must provide clear directions and guidelines to enable Risda Bina to develop lands owned by Risda for real estate development purposes.

"Risda's subsidiaries must also avoid relying too much on the main company and instead explore the overseas market.

"The subsidiaries must shut down businesses that doesn't bring profits to the company, for example on the Boer goat breeding," he said.

The PAC also recommended for Risda College to upgrade its academic courses in order to reduce the number of drop outs.

The committee also called on the college to provide its progress report and graduates' marketability since its inception.

"Risda College must hold a study to find out whether the skill and technical courses it offers is in accordance with the job market and if it helps graduates in their job search." he adde

12. Women less inclined to commit fraud: MACC chief



Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission chief commissioner Datuk Zulkifli Ahmad (right) speaks during the Berita Harian's "Rasuah - Cabaran Bagi Wanita" (Corruption - Challenges for Women) forum at Balai Berita in Bangsar.

KUALA LUMPUR: Women are less likely to commit fraud thanks to their natural instinct and motivation in carrying out their duties honestly, Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission chief commissioner Datuk Zulkifli Ahmad said today.

Generally, he said, women were more thorough in terms of work, abide by the law and honest compared to their male counterparts.

Speaking at Berita Harian's "Rasuah - Cabaran Bagi Wanita" (Corruption - Challenges for Women) forum, he said women had more integrity and firm when placed at important and decision-making positions.

"They are shy by nature; they have a stronger emotion when it comes to shame and embarrassment too.

"At the same time, the motivation for women to take bribes are less than men... like one of the participants (in the forum) said, men may want to enjoy more, while the women work to bring home money to the children and family.

"I support the government's move to put more women at the decision and policy-making positions as there are not many there right now." he said.

Zulkifli said despite the women's attitude towards corruption, such acts still happen.

Based on the latest statistics, Zulkifli said out of the total 855 arrests made from Aug 2015 to Aug 2016, only 79 were women, or only 9.2 per cent.

Out of 910 arrests made from Aug 2016 to July this year, he said only 110 were women, or equivalent to 12.08 per cent.

Meanwhile, out of the 272 people charged from Aug 2015 to Aug 2016, only 24 (8.8 per cent) of them were women.

"From Aug 2016 to July this year, out of 405 people charged, only 38 (9.3 per cent) were women.

"Based on this, you can see a minor increase. The number of women arrested increased by 2.88 per cent, while the number of charges increased 0.5 per cent.

"You can see from the small numbers, women appeared less likely to be involved in corruption and abuse of power." he said.

The forum today was moderated by Berita Harian's Associate Editor of Current Affairs Kadir Dikoh.

Also present were Media Prima Bhd chairman Tan Sri Ismee Ismail, New Straits Times Press (NSTP) chairman Tan Sri Ismail Omar, NSTP chief executive officer Datuk Abdul Jalil Hamid and Berita Harian group editor Datuk Mahfar Ali.

13. FIC Kuching hotel purchase probe: MACC to summon key witnesses this week



"A few key witnesses will be called to record their statements this week. We will update who will be called... it starts today and will continue until end of the week," he told a press conference after participating in Berita Harian's "Rasuah - Cabaran Bagi Wanita" forum today. Pic by NSTP/ROSELA ISMAIL

KUALA LUMPUR: Key witnesses will be called for questioning to assist investigations into Felda Investment Corporation's (FIC) purchase of a luxury hotel in Kuching, Sarawak.

Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Datuk Zulkifli Ahmad said the questioning process will begin from today until end of the week.

"We are currently completing the investigation paper on FIC, namely the hotel purchase in Sarawak as it only involves documents and witnesses in the country.

"A few key witnesses will be called to record their statements this week. We will update who will be called... it starts today and will continue until end of the week," he told a press conference after participating in Berita Harian's "Rasuah - Cabaran Bagi Wanita" forum today.

FIC's 2014 purchase of the Kuching hotel, which features 213 guest rooms and apartment suites, had raised suspicions of corruption and abuse of power.

It is alleged that FIC paid between RM40 million and RM50 million more than the actual market value of the hotel.

Meanwhile, commenting on FIC's hotel purchase in London case, Zulkifli said it may take some time to be completed.

Zulkifli clarified that an investigation paper was never been opened back in 2014 when the issue was first raised due to weak evidence.

However, Zulkifli said when he was appointed chief commissioner, he reviewed the case once again and at the same time, received new information arising from the FGV investigation involving power abuse and corruption.

The MACC chief announced earlier last month that the MACC was investigating the purchase based on initial reports that the hotel was bought above the market price, causing millions of ringgit in losses to the investment arm of the plantations giant.

The four-star Park City Hotel in Kensington, comprising 62 guest rooms and two three-bedroom serviced apartments, was reportedly overpaid by at least £20 million (RM110 million).

It was reported that FIC had bought the hotel for £98 million (RM543 million) in 2014.

14. Two men held in connection with FIC probe released by MACC



(File pix) Two suspects linked to the Felda Investment Corporation (FIC) investigations by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) were released here today.

PUTRAJAYA: Two suspects linked to the Felda Investment Corporation (FIC) investigations by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) were released here today.

Mohd Zahid Md Arip, a special aide to former Felda chairman Tan Sri Isa Samad, and former FIC chief executive officer Zaid Abdul Jalil, were released after being remanded eight days.

They were brought separately to the Putrajaya lower court complex by MACC officers and later released on bail set at RM200,000 with RM5,000 deposited with two sureties.

Both Zahid and Zaid were arrested on Aug 1 for investigations by the MACC on the purchase of a hotel in Kuching at an inflated rate.

Meanwhile the MACC is expected to call up three FIC directors to give their statements on the purchase of the hotel in 2014 here today.

The three who are still in services are expected the MACC headquarters

15. Two more arrested in MACC swoop on illegal Penang factory



Two more people have been arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in its probe into an illegal carbon filter factory in Sungai Lembu, Bukit Mertajam. Pix by Shahnaz Fazlie Shahrizal

GEORGE TOWN: Two more people have been arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in its probe into an illegal carbon filter factory in Sungai Lembu, Bukit Mertajam.

The two comprise the factory manager as well as its director.

The manager, 70, was detained at 6.05pm today while his 37-year-old son was arrested at 6.25pm at the state MACC office here.

Earlier this afternoon, MACC arrested state Environment, Welfare and Caring Committee chairman Phee Boon Poh to assist investigations into the illegal factory.

He was arrested at 3.35pm as he was giving his statement at the state MACC office.

MACC officers also visited his office in Komtar as well as his house in Butterworth, where they carted away several documents.

The trio will be brought to the magistrate's court for remand tomorrow.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the arrests.

Yesterday, MACC raided the factory in Sungai Lembu, its office, as well as the Licensing Department office of the Seberang Prai Municipal Council.

The raid was carried out after alleged inaction by the council against the factory despite numerous reports lodged with the authorities.

Meanwhile, a candlelight vigil has been organised outside the MACC office at 9.30pm, following Phee's arrest. A 'solidarity gathering' has also been organised at the courts tomorrow.

16. Sg Lembu illegal factory probe: Norlela baffled by criticism, says willing to cooperate with MACC



PKR's Penanti assemblyman Dr Norlela Ariffin said she was more than willing to speak to MACC if called upon in the course of the MACC investigation, despite the fact that she had been receiving flak from her party members and allies for thanking the commission following the raid against the carbon filter factory on Thursday.

GEORGE TOWN: PKR's Penanti assemblyman Dr Norlela Ariffin is prepared to cooperate with Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) over the Sungai Lembu illegal factory issue.

Norlela said she was more than willing to speak to MACC if called upon in the course of the MACC investigation.

She said this was despite the fact that she had been receiving flak from her party members and allies for thanking the commission following the raid against the carbon filter factory on Thursday.

"Since my Facebook post on Friday, thanking MACC, I have been scolded by everyone. I had ended up blocking some people from reaching me because I could not bear the stress (of seeing the comments)," she said when contacted.

On Thursday, MACC and several agencies raided the Sungai Lembu illegal factory in Bukit Mertajam, following complaints and reports lodged by villagers.

Since then, MACC had launched more raids at Seberang Perai Municipal Council's licensing department, State Environment committee chairman Phee Boon Poh's office in Komtar, service centre and two houses in Butterworth.

MACC seized several documents during these raids, including a letter allegedly by Phee ordering that no action to be taken against the factory.

Phee was detained by MACC on Friday, after he went to the MACC headquarters here to give his statement. Also detained were the 70-year-old manager of the factory and his 37-year-old son. The three has been remanded for five days.

Norlela, who had recently suffered from a stroke, said she was baffled by the backlash she had been receiving over the matter.

"I do not understand why they are angry with me. I was merely doing my job as an assemblyman when I brought up the issue in the state Legislative assembly

"I have been bringing up the issue at the State Legislative Assembly sitting since May 2015 and during the last sitting in May this year, my motion on the illegal factory was rejected and I was even scolded for it," she said,

She said she had been glad when she heard action was finally taken against the factory as her constituents had been calling for justice for the past two years.

"I was caught between a rock and a hard place then, as my constituent were also upset with me over the lack of action against the factory.

"They did not understand that while I have been fighting for them, I did not have the power or authority to take any action against the factory," she said.

She said in May this year, Sungai Lembu residents submitted a 18-page petition with more than 100 signatures complaining about the factory, which was emitting fumes that they feared was hazardous to their health. She said this also follows the death of a lorry driver, who had fallen into the kiln of the factory and burnt to death.

"Any one of the residents could have filed a complaint with MACC over the factories after their cries and even petition went unheard," she said.

Norlela revealed that she had also been baffled by the lack of action against the factory.

"I had brought to the attention of the local council many other illegal factory including a aluminium smelting company in the past.

"In those times, the local council had even demolished the company after they failed to close up. So I was surprised there was nothing done against the carbon filter processing factory," she said.

She said she was told that a RM250 compound was issued against the factory and that there were attempt to legalise the factory.

"However, the factory's application for planning permission, which was vital for it to be legalised, was rejected by the One Stop Centre as the factory was sitting on a hill.

"Following that, I truly expected action to be taken against the factory." she said.

17. Seized bauxite stockpile at RM1.28 billion, most found at Felda Bukit Goh and Kuantan Port



(File pix) Yesterday, the MACC announced that it would seize 10 million metric tonnes of bauxite stockpile to prevent the mineral from being sold and to facilitate a probe into unlawful bauxite-mining. Pix by Farizul Hafiz Awang

KUANTAN: The 10 million tonnes of bauxite stockpile seized by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission was estimated at RM1.28 billion and most are concentrated in areas around Felda Bukit Goh and the Kuantan port here.

Pahang Mining Operators Association vice-president Yap Soon Huat said the estimation was based on the average export price of a tonne of the mineral at USD30 (RM128).

"I was truly surprised when informed about the 10 million tonnes of bauxite confiscated by the MACC starting from yesterday as bauxite-mining activities had dropped after the government enforced the moratorium (on mining bauxite).

"I am not sure in regards to those who conduct illegal bauxite-mining. Last year records showed that bauxite export only came to six tonnes while for 2015 there was 25 tonnes of known (bauxite) that recorded it as the highest bauxite export in the world after Indonesia halted its (bauxite) mining activities," he said when contacted.

Yesterday, the MACC announced that it would seize 10 million metric tonnes of bauxite stockpile to prevent the mineral from being sold and to facilitate a probe into unlawful bauxite-mining.

The confiscation of the bauxite stockpile found on government and private land is made under Section 33 of the MACC Act 2009 and those who contravene the seizure notice can be punished under Section 69 of the same Act.

MACC had also suggested for the Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Ministry to relook the issuance of Approved Permits (AP) to bauxite miners and the cancellation of all AP issued previously.

When contacted, Pahang MACC director Datuk Alias Salim confirmed several areas where bauxite stockpiles were seized are located near Felda Bukit Goh and Kuantan Port.

However, he declined to provide further details about the MACC seizure operation in the state.

On Aug 2, MACC conducted a wide crackdown on illegal bauxite-mining, nabbing a senior state Customs enforcement officer, 10 state Land and Mines Office (PTG) enforcement officers, and a PTG general assistant.

The Customs officer was alleged to have taken kickbacks to turn a blind eye to illegally-mined bauxite brought to Kuantan Port to be exported overseas.

The 10 PTG officers were purported to have received bribes to inform miners of any impending raids by the authorities.

According to MACC deputy public prosecutor Mohamad Fadhly Mohd Zamry, only the PTG general assistant remains under remand while the others had been released from remand.

At the Kuantan Courts Complex here today, Magistrate Nordiana Abd Aziz allowed an application by MACC prosecuting officer Mohd Faisal Ibrahim to extend the remand on the PTG general assistant.

His remand was ordered to run for five days from Monday (Aug 14) until Friday (Aug 18).

Meanwhile, checks at Felda Bukit Goh here found a sign, on an entrance to land where there was bauxite stockpile, notifying of the seizure.

A drive along the major roads inside the Felda plantation reveals wide reddish clearings with towering stockpiles of bauxite.

Heavy machinery and excavators lay silent at areas where reddish bauxite stained the earth, their operators not seen within the vicinity.

Now and then, white coloured four-wheel drive vehicles could be seen parked at the side of the road leading to land where bauxite stockpile is located.

The identities of the drivers and any other occupants within were hard to be ascertained due to the vehicles' partially-tinted windows.

These surreptitious vehicles hint at the presence of "tontos" or lookouts purportedly used by miners to monitor for any incoming raids and keep away unwanted attention to the illicit mining activities taking place in the settlement.

On Jan 15 last year, the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry ordered a moratorium on all bauxite-mining activities.

The federal government order however permitted transportation of bauxite stockpiles, collected from mining activities done before the moratorium, out from the mining areas to Kuantan Port for shipping overseas.

18. Isa Samad arrested by MACC in connection with FIC probe

PUTRAJAYA: Tan Sri Isa Samad has been arrested by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) today in connection with the ongoing investigation into Felda Investment Corporation (FIC)'s hotel purchases in London and Kuching.

The former Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) chairman was nabbed when he presented himself at MACC headquarters at 2.40pm here to have his statement recorded.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki confirmed that the arrest was made at 4.24pm.

"The arrest is a follow-up action based on statements recorded by the investigation team on the purchases of the luxury hotels previously.

"MACC is confident that it has strong basis to carry out the arrest to help in concluding the investigations on the case," he added.

Earlier, Isa who arrived at the commission, wearing mustard yellow suit and blue pants, was seen smiling at reporters before entering the commission's building here.

Two months ago, the Prime Minister's Office had announced that Isa has been appointed acting chairman of the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD).

MACC is currently investigating FIC's purchase of a property in Kensington, London, between 2013 and 2015, for a total of £60mil (RM330mil) when actual value of the property at the time of purchase was said to be RM110 million.

The graftbuster is also in the midst of investigating, FIC's 2014 purchase of a Kuching hotel, comprising 213 guest rooms and apartment suites which had raised suspicions of corruption and abuse of power.

It is believed that FIC paid between RM40 million and RM50 million higher than the actual market value of the hotel.

FIC is the investment arm of Felda.

Last week, MACC recorded statements from FIC's three former board members; Datuk Noor Ehsanuddin Mohd Harun Narrashid, Datuk Nik Azman Mohamed Zain and Datuk Dr Omar Salim.

Later, Felda Legal Division Director Helwani Lukman and another lawyer, believed to be the partner of the lawyer arrested by MACC two weeks ago, were also summoned for questioning.

So far, ten people, including Isa, have been arrested and more than 30 witnesses have recorded their statements to assist in the ongoing probe.

Among those remanded were former FIC chief executive officer Zaid Abdul Jalil and Muhammad Zahid Md Arip, who was the former press secretary to Isa when he was still chairman



19. Press chances on MACC visiting Sungai Lembu residents in illegal factory investigation



Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission officers today visited Sungai Lembu to speak with the residents over the illegal carbon filter factory nearby.

GEORGE TOWN: Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission officers today visited Sungai Lembu to speak with the residents over the illegal carbon filter factory nearby.

The officers were seen seated with the village committee chairman Tan Sing Lee and two others at a coffee shop in the area.

They were seen talking for nearly an hour.

Members of media had stumbled upon the meeting while covering DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang's visit to the village an hour before the arrival of the MACC officers.

Tan said the MACC officers informed him this morning that they would be visiting the villagers to interview them today.

However, he said, that the MACC officers had asked them instead to come to their office in Butterworth to give their statements after seeing the large number of media members in the area.

"They could have taken our statements at the village but when they say there were many members of the media here, they said we have to come to their officer," he said.

Tan said the officer gave them a written order to be present at the office to have their statements recorded.

Sungai Lembu village development and security committee (JKKK) secretary Yeo Keng Chuan said he would be accompanying Tan to the MACC's office.

Meanwhile, a MACC spokesman said that they were recording the statements of the residents as part of their investigation.

"We are calling several people, including Penanti assemblyman Dr Norlela Ariffin, to have their statements recorded.

"We spoke to three villagers, who also held positions in the JKKK and have called them to our office," he said.

20. MACC yet to establish link between illegal Sg Lembu factory and Phee's bank accounts

An MACC source told New Straits Times that the anti-graft agency had frozen Phee's four personal bank accounts earlier in the week.

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is trying to ascertain if there is a link between the millions of ringgit found in Penang state executive councillor Phee Boon Poh's bank accounts and the illegal carbon filter factory in Sungai Lembu.

An MACC source told New Straits Times that the anti-graft agency had frozen Phee's four personal bank accounts earlier in the week.

"The balance in the four accounts amounts to nearly RM2million.

"We are trying to trace the source of the money and determine it was given to Phee by parties linked to the factory. We will check the bank transaction history for all the accounts over the past few years.

"Until the investigation is completed, the accounts will be frozen," said the source when contacted today.

During the raid at Phee's house in Sungai Puyu on Aug 13, the source said MACC officers did not find any unusual stacks of money there.

He said this had prompted the officers to freeze the accounts to facilitate the ongoing probe into the case.

The source also did not rule out the possibility of MACC freezing other assets belonging to Phee if they were found to be linked with the illegal factory.

"The officers are still investigating. It is far from over.

"More statements will be taken from several parties, including the villagers (in Sungai Lembu) and Penanti assemblyman Dr Norlela Ariffin," the source added.

Efforts to reach MACC deputy chief commissioner Datuk Azam Baki and Phee for confirmation on the frozen bank accounts were unsuccessful.

Phee is on medical leave until tomorrow (Aug 21), after which he is expected to provide an explanation over a letter he allegedly issued ordering the authorities not to take action against the illegal factory.

The MACC and other government agencies raided the illegal factory in Sungai Lembu on Aug 10 following complaints by local residents.

Phee was arrested the following day after his office on the 53rd floor of Komtar was raided by the MACC. Also detained were the factory's 70-year-old manager and his 37-year-old son, a director.

The trio were remanded for five days to facilitate investigations into the illegal factory but the remand order was set aside by the Penang High Court.

The MACC plans to appeal the decision.

On Aug 13, the MACC raided Phee's service centre and two houses in Taman Dahlia and Sungai Puyu here. Phee is Sungai Puyu assemblyman.

The MACC is investigating Phee for allegedly issuing two letters to the Seberang Prai Municipal Council ordering it to delay action against the illegal factory.

Phee is being investigated under Section 23 of the MACC Act 2009 for abuse of power for gratification.

If found guilty, Phee faces 20 years in jail, a fine of not less than five times the value of gratification or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

21. MACC freezes Penang exco's bank accounts



GEORGE TOWN: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has frozen four bank accounts belonging to Penang Welfare, Caring Society and Environment Committee chairman Phee Boon Poh in the probe into an illegal carbon filter factory in Bukit Mertajam.

A source said there were RM2 million in Phee's personal accounts.

"MACC has frozen them earlier in the week. They will be frozen until investigation completes.

"More statements need to be recorded," said the source today.

MACC and other government agencies raided the illegal factory in Sungai Lembu on Aug 10.

In a follow-up raid the next day at Phee's office in Komtar here, Phee was arrested along with two others, the factory's 70-year-old manager and his 37-year-old son, the factory's director.

Phee is being investigated under Section 23 of the MACC Act 2009 for abuse of power for gratification.

The High Court here has set aside the five-day remand order and he was released on Aug 14.

MACC is expected to appeal the decision soon.

22. FGV's Isa freed on half-million ringgit bail

PUTRAJAYA: Former Felda Global Ventures Bhd (FGV) chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad, who was remanded as part of a probe into allegations of corruption at Felda Investment Corporation (FIC), was released on bail today at the Putrajaya magistrate's court.

Isa, 68, was brought to the lower court complex by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officers at 9.50am in MACC lock-up attire.

He walked out of the court a free man at 10.45am, accompanied by family members and almost 200 supporters.

The Registrar of Subordinate Court of Malaya, Datuk Zainal Abidin Kamarudin, issued the order to have Isa released on RM150,000 cash bail and personal bonds at RM350,000, with two sureties.

He was represented by six lawyers, led by Datuk K. Kumaraendran.

"We want to stress that he was not brought in as an offender, but only to assist in investigations.

"Although he was initially brought in under Section 16 of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 for the offence of allegedly accepting gratifications, he has not been charged.

"He will cooperate in future investigations if needed," Kumaraendran said.

Other lawyers in the team who were present today include Dev Kumaraendran, Ridha Ahdar Subry, Datuk Khairul Anwar Rahmat, Lavina Kumarendran and Datuk N. Sivananthan.

When met by reporters, Khairul said the court has been gracious in lowering the bail which was initially set at RM1 million.

"The amount was reduced based on their evaluation that Isa was cooperative throughout the investigation, and for the fact that he had contributed to the country.

"The court also released him based on his responsibilities to serve the people.

"I want to clearly state that he was never brought in as a suspect, but only to assist in the investigations," Khairul added.

Isa was detained by the MACC on Aug 15 at the MACC's headquarters, where he was called to have his statement recorded over FIC's purchase of a hotel in London.

FIC's purchase of the property in Kensington was at £60mil (RM330mil) when actual value of the property at the time of purchase was said to be RM110 million.



Former Felda Global Ventures Bhd (FGV) chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad, who was remanded as part of a probe into allegations of corruption at Felda Investment Corporation (FIC), was released on bail today at the Putrajaya magistrate's court.

23. Selangor govt welcomes probe by MACC and assured its cooperation



The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officer brought the box believed to be the document after 7 hours of investigating the issue involving the university with a concessionaire, Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd (JNSB) at the MBI, Bangunan Darul Ehsan Selangor office.

SHAH ALAM: The Selangor government urged the the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Agency to be professional in its probe on Universiti Selangor (Unisel) and Menteri Besar Selangor Incorporated (MBI).

Selangor Menteri Besar Office strategic communications director Yin Shao Loong said the state welcomes the investigation which followed a report made against the government but urge the graft busters not to be influenced by political pressure.

"The state government will continue to give its cooperation to MACC on any investigation that are being carried out. At the same time, we will strictly defend the principles of accountability and integrity in the governance of the state government and its subsidiaries," Yin said.

"Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, the committee chairman of the education, human capital development, science, technology and innovation as well as MBI had issued an official statement on July 25 and July 27 this year on allegations mounted on the Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd issue.

"The Selangor state government had acted on this matter based on a court decision where the parties involved had agreed with an out of court settlement," Yin said in a statement.

"The settlement that was reached between Unisel and Jana Niaga was based on good governance. It does not involve the Selangor Menteri Besar (Datuk Seri Azmin Ali) in his personal capacity. Neither was it made on the individual capacity of those who had made the decision on the settlement of the dispute," said Yin.

Meanwhile, Nik Nazmi said the settlement dispute undertaken by Unisel and Jana Niaga was decided at the board of directors' level and the process was carried out by putting the priority of the university, especially the students, first.

In a statement, Nik Nazmi, who is also Seri Setia assemblyman, said the Selangor state government, Unisel and MBI would extend its fullest cooperation to MACC so that this matter would be resolved the soonest possible.

"We will leave it to the MACC to carry out investigations and at the same time, we will provide all proof and statements that are needed," he said.

24. MACC to meet witnesses abroad over FIC's London hotel purchase probe



MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki.

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) would record witness statements from abroad to finalise its investigation into Felda Investment Corporation (FIC)'s hotel purchase in London.

Speaking to reporters here today, MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said the commission will have to go to the countries where the witnesses are residing, to have their statements recorded.

"This process would involve Mutual Legal Assistance. We can't just jump into the other country's to investigate.

"We have to apply through our Attorney-General (AG) here, and the AG here will communicate with the AG there. So it will take some time.

"Currently we are in the midst of applying to the Attorney-General's Chamber (AGC)," he after attending the commission's new office here at Presint 7, today.

On the number of witness' from abroad who will be involved, Azam said the commission had identified several people.

"The witnesses involve both Malaysians and foreigners who are abroad," he added.

Commenting on the FIC's purchase of luxury hotel in Kuching, Azam said the investigations on the case is expected to be wrapped up soon.

"We are leaving it to the AGC and the deputy public prosecutor to evaluate and decide on the charges after they go through the statements we have recorded," he added.

On Monday, Azam confirmed that former Felda Global Ventures (FGV) chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad is indeed a suspect in the case of the purchase of two hotels by FIC.

Isa, who is the acting Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chairman, was detained by MACC last Tuesday. He was released on a RM150,000 bail on Sunday following a five-day remand.

On MACC's investigation on the Universiti of Selangor (Unisel) and Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd case, Azam said four witnesses has been called so far to have their statements recorded.

Earlier, today, MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad had said that action will be taken against individuals making statements to the media of ongoing investigations.

"The commission views this seriously. It is becoming a trend for the public or those who are involved to make a media statement.

"This is an offence, as we deemed it as interference in any investigation.

"Action will be taken under Section 48 (h) of the MACC Act 2009. If found guilty, can be fined up to RM10,000 or imprisonment of not more than 2 years, or both," he said.

Dzulkifli said these individuals must approach MACC if there is any information or statements that needs to be made.

He also urged those questioning MACC's investigation or action, to refrain from doing so, as it was uncalled for.

"MACC's job is to make sure that this country is free from corruption. We don't have any vested interest on anything or anyone.

"We will take action against anyone who is involved in corruption or power abuse, be it politicians, civil servants or corporate people," he added.

The commission will take legal action for defamation against people who defame the commission, Dzulkifli said.

25. Peace in Bukit Goh after MACC seizes bauxite stockpiles



Felda Bukit Goh Village Development and Security Committee (JKKK) chairman Mat Zahari Deraman said lorries no longer plied the roads in the village to transport bauxite to the Kuantan Port.

KUANTAN: Peace has prevailed over areas where bauxite is being stockpiled following seizure of 10 million tonnes of the ore by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in Pahang on Aug 12.

In Felda Bukit Goh, where the stockpiles are located, villagers speak of stalled heavy machinery and the absence of lorries passing through their areas.

Felda Bukit Goh Village Development and Security Committee (JKKK) chairman Mat Zahari Deraman said lorries no longer plied the roads in the village to transport bauxite to the Kuantan Port.

"There have been no lorries carrying bauxite. Also, there are no more complaints by villagers of noise from such lorries," said the 68-year-old.

Zahari said the settlement had become more peaceful as villagers no longer had to worry about bauxite dust and their safety when travelling on the roads.

Pahang Mining Operators Association vice-president Yap Soon Huat urged the government to consider the welfare of miners who had been affected by the moratorium and the seizure of bauxite.

"The activity (transporting of bauxite) is vital to their (miners') livelihood such as to pay for the needs of their families," he said.

Yap said others affected by the seizure included operators of heavy machinery and labourers.

He said it was true that some miners were not fully dependent on bauxite-mining operations as they were also involved in mining for manganese and iron ore.

"However, not all miners can make the switch," he said, adding that some were fully focused on bauxite.

A medical officer in Felda Bukit Goh had a different sentiment.

Speaking anonymously, the officer said she welcomed the seizure order by MACC as it would safeguard the health of the residents.

"I used to see suspicious lorries transporting red earth through Felda Bukit Goh when I was going to work," she said.

She said in January last year when she started working in Felda Bukit Goh, she used to treat a number of patients with bouts of coughing and other ailments, which could be linked to the presence of bauxite in the area.

On Aug 12, MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki announced that the graftbuster would seize 10 million tonnes of bauxite in Pahang to facilitate a probe into graft linked to illegal bauxite-mining activities.

Azam had said that the stockpile seized could be held up to 18 months and that those who violated the MACC seizure notice faced action under Section 69 of the MACC Act 2009.

Meanwhile, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, state secretary Datuk Seri Muhammad Safian Ismail, state Land and Mines Office director Datuk Nazri Abu Bakar, and state MACC director Datuk Alias Salim did not answer calls and reply to text messages.

26. Four MBI officers called up by MACC to give statements on controversial RM16 million payments



MACC deputy commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said more were witnesses would be called up to assist in the investigation.

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has recorded statements from four Selangor Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI) officers as part of the probe into irregularities involving RM16 million.

MACC deputy commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said more were witnesses would be called up to assist in the investigation.

"The investigation is being carried out as there was a report lodged with us.

"We are in the process of gathering statements from witnesses," he told reporters after the opening ceremony of MACC's new building at Presint 7 here today.

On whether there would be arrests soon, Azam said the commission was now focusing only on recording statements from witnesses.

MBI, Universiti of Selangor (Unisel) and Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd came under the spotlight on Tuesday, when MACC initiated investigations into two suspicious payments totalling RM16 million.

It was reported that MBI made the payments twice to Jana Niaga, even though its contract to maintain the student accommodation at the campus in Bestari Jaya, had allegedly been terminated by Unisel in 2012.

The payments were believed to have been made in two instalments of RM10 million in 2015 and RM6 million last year.

The contract was terminated due to Jana Niaga's failure in executing its duties to maintain the hostel at Bestari Jaya as underlined in the contract with Unisel.

MACC also conducted a simultaneous eight-hour operations on the same day, raiding Unisel's main campus in Bestari Jaya and in Section 7; Jana Niaga offices in Desa Pandan (Kuala Lumpur) and Bestari Jaya as well as the MBI office in Section 14, Shah Alam, seizing 10 boxes filled with documents.

27. MACC to net big fish in Sabah

KOTA KINABALU: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is gearing up to net a big fish in Sabah, soon.

The state's commission director Datuk Sazali Salbi said MACC is conducting several operations at the moment.

"We are still at the stage of gathering the necessary evidence and documents. When the time is right, we will strike.

"However, it will not be next week but it is coming soon. Maybe next month," he said without hinting any clue, as to who the big fish is likely to be.

Sazli said this to reporters after attending the 'Ikrar Bebas Rasuah' pledge with Universiti Malaysia Sabah at the institute of higher learning's chancellery building, here, yesterday.

Sabah MACC had recently said it is keeping a close eye on civil servants of two governmental agencies suspected of corrupt practice.

This week, the commission's enforcement officers nabbed four policemen in Lahad Datu for bribery and eight medical assistants at Queen Elizabeth Hospital here for falsifying overtime claims.

When asked whether the hospital was one of the two agencies under Sabah MACC's radar, Sazali said the healthcare sector was among them.

"That is the smaller one but the one coming is bigger. Just wait and see," he smiled.

Meanwhile, on the commission's probe into Felda Investment Corporation's purchase of hotel, Sazali stressed that the probe was conducted by its Putrajaya headquarters and Sabah MACC was not involved.

MACC sources told New Straits Times that the commission was looking at Grand Borneo Hotel, a three-star hotel and part of the 1Borneo Hypermall here, which Felda acquired in 2012 for RM86.4 million.

They said the latest investigation was to establish if the hotel acquisition here was done in the same manner involving the other two properties in question, the Park City Grand Plaza in Kensington, London, and Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites in Kuching, Sarawak.

On Aug 18, MACC deputy commissioner for operations Datuk Azam Baki had been reported saying investigations into FIC's purchase of the Grand Borneo Hotel were still in its early stages and have yet to reveal any wrongdoing.

28. MBI remains mum on MACC probe



(File pix) Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azmin Ali. Selangor Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI) has chosen to remain silent on the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) ongoing investigation into Universiti Selangor (Unisel) and Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd.

SHAH ALAM: Selangor Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI) has chosen to remain silent on the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) ongoing investigation into Universiti Selangor (Unisel) and Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd.

MBI also remained mum on the recent report lodged against Darul Ehsan Investment Group (DEIG) for alleged abuse of power and graft.

MBI chief operating officer Soffan Affendi Aminudin avoided fielding questions on both issues when met at an event in Dataran Kemerdekaan earlier today.

He said such questions should be directed to Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azmin Ali instead.

"I have just gotten back from an overseas trip yesterday (Saturday). Let me get back to the office first and find out what had happened," he said briefly.

MBI, Unisel and Jana Niaga have been the subject of MACC's investigations over a suspicious payment of RM16 million.

MACC had previously conducted the raids to facilitate investigations into suspicious payments totalling RM16 million, which MBI had allegedly made to Jana Niaga in two instalments — RM10 million in 2016 and RM6 million last year.

The payments were allegedly made to Jana Niaga, even though its contract to maintain the student accommodation at the campus in Bestari Jaya had been terminated by Unisel in 2012.

MACC, in a simultaneous eight-hour operation on Tuesday, raided Unisel's main campus in Bestari Jaya and in Section 7, Jana Niaga's offices in Desa Pandan and Bestari Jaya as well as the MBI office in Section 14 here.

On Friday, the Petaling Jaya Utara and Kelana Jaya Umno Youth urged MACC to probe how DEIG, a company established with RM2 paid capital, could be given project worth RM10 billion to develop state-owned lands.

PJU Umno Youth chief Mohamad Fakhzan Md Noor was reported as saying that DEIG was in set up in early 2015 and would only kickstart its operations the following year.

However, it was reported a month later that DEIG, through its subsidiary DEIG Land, would carry out a project worth about RM10 billion with MBI and had started a Request For Information (RFI) for development works on Selangor state government lands in Shah Alam, Gombak and Bukit Beruntung the same year.

Fakhzan had also claimed that checks with the Companies Commission on DEIG last week showed although it was still a company with a paid capital of RM2, it could apply for a RM500 million loan.

Fakhzan had also alleged that the PKR-led state government under Datuk Seri Azmin Ali's leadership also planned to transfer state government assets worth RM30 billion to DEIG.

29. MACC to probe Gatco estate land deal



Chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will set up a task force to investigate the 30-year-old Gatco estate land deal. (pic by NSTP/HASRIYASYAH SABUDIN)

JEMPOL: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will set up a task force to investigate the 30-year-old Gatco estate land deal.

Chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad said MACC would conduct a study on the land deal and investigate if there was a case.

"We will form the special task force soon. We need time to conduct a study on the case as we also need to tend to a report lodged by the Gatco residents action committee," Dzulkifli said at the commission's "Ziarah Kasih" programme here today.

Dzulkifli said the case has been prolonged for too long, and it was time MACC gave it the attention it deserved, but cautioned that it would take time, as the task force needed to examine all aspects of the land deal.

"Once the study is complete and there is justification for MACC to open an investigation paper, we will investigate whether there were elements of abuse of power and corruption."

Dzulkifli said he had already listened to the problems faced by the villagers of Gatco, now renamed Kampung Serampang Indah, and he would meet other parties to get their side of the story.

The Gatco estate was previously owned by Syarikat Gula Negeri Sembilan, which then leased 2,000ha to the Negri Sembilan State Development Corp for 99 years.

Negeri Sembilan State Development Corp then leased the land for to The Great Allonioners Trading Corporation Bhd (Gatco) in 1977 for 66 years.

The villagers under the land scheme paid between RM4,000 and RM7,000 to Gatco to own their respective plots of land.

Gatco, however, faced financial problems, and the land was seized by Pengurusan Danaharta Nasional Bhd under a public auction and subsequently sold to Thamarai Holdings in 2007.

The residents, however, had been left in limbo, as they did not get their land nor their money back from Gatco.

30. Selangor MB's aide at MACC headquarters over Unisel probe

PUTRAJAYA: The Selangor Menteri Besar's strategic communications director Yin Shao Loong arrived at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) headquarters this morning to assist the investigation into University Selangor (Unisel).

He came alone at 9.25am, ahead of his 10am appointment with the graft buster.

The MACC investigation team is headed by its investigation director Datuk Simi Abd Ghani.

Confirming the ongoing probe, Simi said the procedures could take the whole day.

"It depends on how much we can gather from him (Yin). It could take the whole day," Simi said.

He did not deny the possibility that Yin could be detained if there was sufficient evidence against him.

"But it's too early for us to tell. We are only questioning him at 10am."

A summons to appear at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya was sent to Yin's office yesterday afternoon.

It was believed that it was about MACC's investigation into Unisel, Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI) and Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd.

On August 22, MACC raided the three entities - a move the Selangor government described as an attempt to smear its image.

It was reported that Jana Niaga allegedly received monetary compensation and a new contract from Unisel despite failing to complete a previous contract.

Unisel and MBI said in a statement that the deal was the result of a High Court and Court of Appeal order to settle the dispute between the university and Jana Niaga via arbitration.

"Both parties had refined and scrutinised several issues to arrive at an amicable solution," MBI chief executive officer Raja Shahreen Raja Othman and Unisel vice-chancellor and president Prof Dr Mohammad Redzuan Othman said in a press statement.

31. MACC releases Selangor MB aide after 5 hours of questioning



After having his statement recorded for five hours, Selangor Menteri Besar's strategic communications director, Yin Shao Loong, was released by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) at 3.55pm today.

PUTRAJAYA: After having his statement recorded for five hours, Selangor Menteri Besar's strategic communications director, Yin Shao Loong, was released by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) at 3.55pm today.

A relief Yin told reporters outside the MACC headquarters that he was called in due to the press statement he issued about the MACC raids in Unisel, Mentri Besar Incorporated (MBI) and Jana Niaga Sdn Bhd last week.

"I told them that I issued the press statement on the MACC raids within my capacity as the press officer in the MB's office," Yin said.

MACC also questioned why he tweeted a copy of the summons he received from them yesterday.

"It's my personal Twitter account. I can tweet whatever I like," he added.

"After all, I know the late Teoh Beng Hock (a press officer who died while under MACC's investigation) and it's good to let people know where I am."

Describing MACC as professional in carrying out their duties, Yin however, thought it was a complete waste of time to summon him just because of a press statement.

"I was basically asked to make a statement about my statement which they've read in the Star. I think it's a waste of time to call me in just because of that."

As the investigation procedures took a long while to be completed, Yin thought he might not be able to return home.

But the head of MACC investigation division Datuk Simi Abd Ghani assured that Yin was called in to assist MACC in its investigation into Unisel.

"He is not a suspect. But we need him to assist us with the ongoing investigation into Unisel," Simi told the New Straits Times over the phone.

The MACC investigation team is currently going through Yin's five-page statement and Simi is uncertain if Yin would be summoned again in the near future.

"I haven't gotten the full report. So I can't comment," Simi said.

A summons to appear at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya was sent to Yin's office yesterday.

On August 22, MACC raided the three entities - a move the Selangor government described as an attempt to smear its image.

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Unisel and MBI said in a statement that the deal was the result of a High Court and Court of Appeal order to settle the dispute between the university and Jana Niaga via arbitration.

32. 1MDB remits full debt payment to IPIC before deadline



1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) has paid the balance of the reportedly US\$603 million it owed to International Petroleum Investment Company PJSC (IPIC), a day before its Aug 31 deadline

KUALA LUMPUR: 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) has paid the balance of the reportedly US\$603 million it owed to International Petroleum Investment Company PJSC (IPIC), a day before its Aug 31 deadline.

1MDB has earlier this month remitted the first payment equivalent to US\$350 million to IPIC.

This came after IPIC had extended the deadline for 1MDB to make a US\$603 million debt payment, provided at least US\$310 million was paid by Aug 12.

1MDB, in a statement today, said it had remitted to IPIC in full the remaining amount it owed to the Abu Dhabi fund.

"All the funds were paid from proceeds of the on-going rationalisation programme," 1MDB added.

In a filing to the London Stock Exchange, IPIC said it had received the second payment.

1MDB originally must settle the US\$603 million payment by July 31 this year under a settlement with IPIC.

1MDB reportedly is due to pay IPIC another US\$603 million by Dec 31 this year under the terms reached during an international arbitration in London in April.