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1. FGV denies delaying CEO's "return" through extended DI proceedings



FGV clarifies that the conclusion of the DI was delayed from last week due to Zakaria submitting a two-day medical certificate to the independent DI panel

KUALA LUMPUR: Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) has dismissed a news report that there were plans to delay its president and chief executive officer Datuk Zakaria Arshad's comeback to the group by extending the deadline of the domestic inquiry (DI) proceedings.

In refuting a slew of inaccuracies in the report by a financial weekly, FGV also denied that its former group president and CEO Datuk Mohd Emir Mavani Abdullah was involved in approving or implementing Safitex Trading LLC's payment process as maintained by Zakaria in the report.

"We wish to clarify that the conclusion of the DI was delayed from last week due to Zakaria submitting a two-day medical certificate (MC) to the independent DI panel in the late afternoon of August 29, 2017.

"In the interest of ensuring proper due process, the independent DI panel took into account Zakaria's MC and adjourned the DI proceedings until Zakaria was able to continue to present his defence on September 5 after the long Merdeka and Hari Raya Aidiladha public holidays," FGV said in its filing to Bursa Malaysia yesterday.

On June 6, Zakaria was suspended along with chief financial officer Ahmad Tifli Mohd Talha and two other senior officers, namely Delima Oil Products senior general manager Kamarzaman Abd Karim and FGV Trading Sdn Bhd CEO Ahmad Salman Omar.

The suspensions were due to alleged accounting irregularities at FGV's subsidiary Delima Oil Products Sdn Bhd, which had dealings with a Dubai-based customer, Safitex Trading.

FGV claimed that none of the Safitex Trading related approvals and transactions had Emir's signature or made any reference to him.

FGV said contrary to the view taken in the report, the decision to scrap the proposed acquisition of a 55 per cent stake in a Chinese edible oil company, Zhong Ling Nutril-Oil Holdings Ltd, was not by Zakaria. It was due to the conditions precedents (CP) in the sales and purchase agreements could not be fulfilled within the CP completion date nor has the same been waived.

"The board decided to make an announcement of the above on April 8, 2016. In February 2017, another proposal to partner with Zhong Ling Nutril-Oil Holdings Ltd in relation to FGV's subsidiary in China was initiated by a working committee under Zakaria's leadership but was aborted due to funding issues," it said.

On the 37 per cent stake in PT Eagle High Plantations, FGV said its opting out of the transaction was also not a decision by Zakaria.

It was due to the negotiations with the vendors namely Rajawali Capital and Rajawali Corpora for a possible different mode of investment in Eagle High did not materialise, with both parties mutually agreed to terminate all negotiations on the proposed acquisitions with immediate effect as announced on December 23, 2016 by FGV board.

"The mode of investment, among others, comprised potential joint venture, off take agreement or other form of mutually agreed collaborations as announced on December 1, 2015.

FGV reiterated that the independent DI panel is expected to deliver its decision early next week.

2. Two more remanded in RM23m graft probe

KUALA LUMPUR: Two more individuals have been remanded by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) today in connection with the Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (PCSB) graft case.

The duo were brought to the Putrajaya Magistrate Court this morning. It is understood that a third individual will be remanded after Friday prayers today.

On Tuesday, the MACC arrested three individuals in connection with the case, including a 45-year-old PCSB project delivery manager.

The other two were a 57-year-old senior official, and a 28-year-old former technical assistant with PCSB.

They were arrested at separate locations on Tuesday.

Magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman had granted MACC's application for the trio to be remanded for six days.

They are believed to have cooperated in falsifying invoices worth RM23 million between April and June 2015.

3. Kuching school headmaster charged with abuse of power over RM86,190 contract



A 58-year-old school headmaster was charged at the Kuching Special Court for Corruption here today with abuse of power involving a contract worth more than RM80,000.

PETRA JAYA: A 58-year-old school headmaster was charged at the Kuching Special Court for Corruption here today with abuse of power involving a contract worth more than RM80,000.

Ismail Idris pleaded not guilty to the charge made against him under Section 23 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009 for abuse of power for gratification, which carries a maximum 20 years' jail sentence and a fine of not less than five times the value of the gratification, or RM10,000, whichever is higher, upon conviction.

He claimed trial to instructing Mazuri Katering to appoint Ismas Catering to supply cooked food under the "Supplementary Food Programme to SK Gita 2" - a contract worth RM86,190.

According to the charge sheet, Ismas Catering is owned by his wife, Saloma Kipli.

Ismail is alleged to have committed the offence at Sekolah Kebangsaan Tan Sri Dr Sulaiman Daud (formerly known as SK Gita 2) on Jul 1, 2016.

Counsel Khairil Azmi Hasbi, who represented the accused, appealed to the court that it is unnecessary to impose a cash bail on his client, since he is still a civil servant.

"My client has six children and no previous conviction," he said.

Judge Nixon Kennedy Kumbong set a RM10,000 court bail in two sureties, and fixed Sept 28 for the pre-trial case management.

The case hearing has been fixed for three days beginning Nov 11.

Earlier, in the same courtroom, a businessman pleaded not guilty to offering RM2,000 to a policeman at a cafe at Jalan Lapangan Terbang here, at 6.11pm on Oct 7 last year.

Wong Hunt Ping, 33, was charged with offering a bribe to Inspector Mohammad Harun from the State Criminal Investigation Department as inducement for the latter not to take action against the former for allegedly committing an offence under Section 379A of the Penal Code for vehicle theft.

Nixon set RM5,000 bail in two sureties for Wong's case. He also fixed Sept 29 for case management and the hearing from Nov 13 until Nov 15.

The prosecution for the first and second cases was conducted by Prosecuting Officer Ikhwan Mohd Ibrahim and Deputy Public Prosecutor Low Chin How from the MACC, respectively.

Counsel Francis Wee appeared on behalf of Wong.

4. Felda Global Ventures Holdings corruption investigation almost complete



(File pix) Investigations into the Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) and Felda Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd (FIC) corruption and power abuse case is expected to be completed this month.

KUALA LUMPUR : Investigations into the Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) and Felda Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd (FIC) corruption and power abuse case is expected to be completed this month.

However, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said they had yet to finalise the list of people who will be recommended to the Attorney-General Chambers to be charged.

He said this included FGV's former chairman Tan Sri Isa Samad and chief executive officer Datuk Zakaria Arshad.

"Investigations are almost complete. There is just a little bit more that we need to do before we submit the report and recommendations.

"Please understand that the MACC's job is to carry out investigations.

"We will submit the findings to the Chambers and the Deputy Public Prosecutor, and they will decide if the case is to be brought to court or not," he said during a press conference at the launch of MACC's collaboration with Prasarana on their first anti-corruption campaign.

The Felda subsidiary's fiasco started when Zakaria and three other top management were forced to go on leave pending an internal inquiry on their transaction with Afghan company Safitex.

MACC's probe into FGV had unraveled evidence of possible corruption and power abuse on FIC's hotel purchases in London and Sarawak.

FIC was reported to have bought a four-star hotel in Kensington, London, for about RM330 million in December 2014, said to be far above the original price, and alleged to have suffered millions of ringgit in losses as a result.

As for the purchase of the Kuching hotel, also in 2014, which features 213 guest rooms and apartment suites, it is alleged that FIC paid between RM40 million and RM50 million more than the actual market value of the hotel.

Isa was arrested on Aug 15 to assist investigations on FIC's questionable purchases of the two luxury hotels.

5. MACC to take on corrupt enforcement authorities involved in illegal gambling operations next



Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC)'s chief commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad.

PUTRAJAYA: The next stage of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) all-out war against graft will be focused on illegal gambling.

Its chief commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said the commission would be training their eyes on the dens, operators and enforcement authorities that give them protection.

"There is a lax of enforcement and there are definitely corruption issues that MACC can focus on. We will take action on those giving and taking bribes," he said, adding that brazen violations on licensing conditions, pointed to the likelihood of corrupt practices.

Among the instances he cited were cybercafés being used as fronts for the activities and the placement of machines related to gambling or the placement of more machines than allowed under their respective licensing conditions.

"The issue of illegal gambling has been discussed for a long time, even the Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has talked about it but we don't see a reduction in the widespread incidents.

"So it's high time for us to take this matter seriously and we will take more aggressive action on those involved in illegal gambling and those protecting these syndicates or operators," said he said after receiving a memorandum from Gerakan Banteras Aktiviti Haram (GBAH), a coalition of Muslim NGOs to express its readiness to work with the commission to eradicate graft.

Dzulkifli said the memorandum reprised the need for MACC to launch a more aggressive campaign to weed out illegal gambling operations as they have a major implication on Malaysian society.

He also said a majority of those involved in the activity were found to be Muslims which also would cause major repercussions.

Masridzi Sat, who is the chairman of GBAH, said the movement is against illegal activities and that the coalition, which had nearly 30 years of experience in researching graft activities and aiding civil servants in crackdowns against illegal gambling dens, sees these developments as very disappointing trends.

"When we are called in as observers during operations with enforcement officers we find that there is leaked information prior to busts. The premises also keep mushrooming despite increasing raids. This shows that there are widespread elements of corruption.

"This is very disappointing because government officers are entrusted with keeping trusts. But when they commit such acts it's akin to treason," he added.

He said that GBAH will continue to urge the government to address the issue through similar memoranda to leaders and the cabinet by demanding a review of the laws, control in the issuance of licenses as well as the eradication of corruption that lingers in the area of enforcement on gambling dens.

Earlier Dzulkifli also said that the commission was prepared to work together with the coalition and would look into areas that they could collaborate on such as the sharing of information.

6. Two remanded over Petronas Carigali graft probe released on RM50,000 bail each



Two individuals who were remanded in connection with the Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (PCSD) graft scandal were released today. Pix by Mohd Fadli Hamzah

PUTRAJAYA: Two individuals who were remanded in connection with the Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (PCSD) graft scandal were released today.

Magistrate Nik Eshfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman ordered the duo to be released on RM50,000 bail each after they were remanded for seven days.

The duo who arrived at about 11am covered their faces while being ushered into the courtroom by several Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commissions (MACC) officers.

They were remanded last Friday to facilitate MACC's investigation on PCSD's drilling project in Sandakan two years ago.

It was reported that PCSD project delivery manager and two other individuals were also remanded last week for the same probe.

According to sources, the trio were believed to have collaborated in submitting three falsified claim for a total RM23.7 million between April and June 2015.

The invoices were inflated amounts for a drilling rig project but no work was carried out.

However, PCSB had made full payment to the company.

7. Construction of RM18 million Tuaran bridge to begin soon: Rahman Dahlan



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan speaking to reporters at the launching of Tuaran bridge project. Pic by NSTP/ Recqueal Raimi

TUARAN: A planned concrete bridge, which will connect Tuaran township with several villages here, is expected to be completed in less than two years.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan said construction of the RM18 million bridge, which will begin at the end of the year, will take 18 months.

The project will begin at Pekan Tuaran, and pass over Sungai Damit to reach villages such as Sungai Damit, Sawah, Bantayan and Damat, among others.

"The bridge will be 104m long and seven metres wide. It will also be furnished with a pedestrian walkway with a width of 1.5m.

"Once completed, the bridge will benefit over 7,000 villagers," he said at the launch of the Tuaran bridge project.

Rahman, who is also Kota Belud assemblyman, said the bridge will be a major convenience for local residents, as they will no longer have to take the long route via Jalan Tuaran-Tamparuli, which takes more than 30 minutes, to reach town.

He added that the modern bridge, which replaces a suspension bridge, would ease travel for villagers.

On another matter, Rahman said that the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stands at RM58.1 billion, based on the 2010 assessment.

"In 2015, the GDP stood at RM73.5 billion, with per-capita income up to RM21,081," he said.

Present at the launch were Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau; Sabah Tourism Board chairman cum Kiulu assemblyman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai; and Sabah Public Works Department director Amrullah Kamal.

8. Auditor General says MPSP failed to pay contribution to DID last year; CM pleads ignorance on matter



The cleaning work of the landslide scene at the Apartments Kayangan Puri Mutiara, Tanjung Bungah. In the morning incident Friday, six vehicles belonging to the damaged population were buried in the ground and hit the trees.

GEORGE TOWN: Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has pleaded ignorance to a charge in the Auditor General's Report 2016 Series 1 that the Seberang Prai Municipal Council (MPSP) failed to dispense its drainage contribution to the State Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) last year.

The report, which was tabled last July, reveals that as of June last year, the MPSP is still withholding RM22.09 million.

Asked to comment on the matter in light of Friday's catastrophic flash floods which affected some 100 locations state-wide, Lim said he is not really aware of the AG's reprimand.

"I need to refer to the DID, but all the (flood mitigation) projects which we approved are carried out by the Department. DID is a federal agency, but we work together with it.

"But I need to check (on the report). I am not in the know about (this) issue, but we will ask the federal government to expedite all DID projects in the state," he told newsmen here.

Yesterday, Berita Harian reported that Penang Public Accounts Committee member Datuk Muhammad Farid Saad had highlighted the state authority's failure to hand over the contribution, which is supposed to have been used for water dispersal projects.

He had also said that the Auditor General's report proves that the Penang government is not serious in addressing the state's chronic flash flooding problem, which is becoming a nightmare for the people.

Farid also said that the state merely pins the blame for the perennial issue on the federal government.

Lim said that state Local Government, Traffic Management and Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow had previously stated that the federal government had announced RM1.4 billion in flood mitigation projects for Penang, but that only RM300 million has been spent.

"Maybe, it has to do with the report.

"What is important is for all these projects to proceed. We will write a letter to the federal government to expedite usage of the remaining RM1.1 billion for projects. We want to cooperate with everyone," Lim added.

Last month, Chow had instructed the MPSP to hand over funds collected from developers to the DID promptly, to facilitate the smooth implementation of flood mitigation and drainage projects.

He had said that the state government, the DID and the MPSP accepted the reprimand from the Auditor General on the weaknesses in transferring the remaining contribution money, and would rectify the matter.

Chow had also said that all monies collected were strictly used to implement flood mitigation and drainage projects and had not been misappropriated.

Farid, who is also Pulau Betong assemblyman, had pointed out that in 2016 alone, four areas in Seberang Prai Tengah were hit by flash floods 21 times.

MCA Youth treasurer Datuk Michael Lee had asked if the state government is so desperate for money that the much-needed funds meant to save lives and prevent hardship has to be withheld.

PKR's Penanti assemblyman Dr Norlela Ariffin had called on the Penang government to reveal the latest fund tally collected from developers to build drains and flood mitigation projects in the state.

Tens of thousands of people woke up to a deluged Friday, with chest-high flood waters crippling many parts of Penang.

The floods also claimed the life of 30-year-old factory worker Noor Afidah Yahunas, who was reported missing after she fell from her motorcycle into a culvert in Paya Terubong, while on her way back from work.

The state government had said that record-breaking rainfall contributed to the flash floods, one of the worst in the state's history.

Meanwhile, Lim denied claims that Friday's floods were a result of the Air Itam Dam overflowing.

9. HL: EPF and Khazanah investment will benefit Malaysians



Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Othman Aziz said claims that the government is doing the US a favour by supporting the EPF investment proposal is completely baseless. Pic by NSTP/ Amran Hamid

ALOR STAR: The Employees Provident Fund's (EPF) move to expand its investment in the United States is a corporate strategy move and has nothing to do with Malaysia doing the world superpower a favour.

Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Othman Aziz said claims that the government is doing the US a favour by supporting the EPF investment proposal is completely baseless.

He pointed out that the US economy size is worth between US\$3 trillion and US\$4 trillion and EPF is merely looking at investment opportunities to generate profits, which later distributed to its members in the form of dividend.

"The proposed investment is the EPF's corporate strategy to balance its domestic, Southeast Asia and the international investment portfolio.

"If you compare the EPF plan to further invest between US\$3 billion and US\$4 billion in the US and the country's economy size is worth between US\$3 trillion and US\$4 trillion, you will understand that it is an investment move.

"How could the investment been accused of doing the US a favour while in reality the retirement fund is also benefiting from the investment?," he asked.

Othman added that it makes sense for the EPF to invest in bigger market than Malaysia, such as the US to generate returns.

He added that all investment decisions by the EPF are subjected to stringent process to protect the interests of its 14 million members.

"The EPF has a very stringent procedures where every investment proposal is strictly scrutinised in terms of risk and return," he said after visiting Sungai Kedah/Anak Bukit flood mitigation project here today.

Othman, who is also Jerlun member of Parliament was commenting on the Opposition criticism on government move to support the EPF plan to increase its investment in the US.

It was reported that the EPF had invested close to US\$7 billion, in terms of equity, in the US and intends to invest US\$3 billion and US\$4 billion to support infrastructure redevelopment in the US.

Othman added that the government investment arm, Khazanah Nasional Berhad had also underwent the same stringent procedure before investing in high tech sector in the US.

"Khazanah is not only investing to generate profit but at the same benefiting from technology transfer... There are some investments which are beyond the equity ownership, such as the purchasing of bond for infrastructure development," he said.

He brushed off the claim by Kedah Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) information chief claim that Datuk Seri Najib Razak recent visit to the US was part of a propaganda to show that the US government is lending its support to the Prime Minister to halt the US Department of Justice (DoJ) against 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

He said the claim was a mere political ploy by the opposition to deny Najib's successful visit to the US at the invitation of President Donald J. Trump

10. RM260 million flood mitigation project causing more floods



The RM260 million Timah Tasoh West Flood Diversion, which was supposed to solve floods in Tebing Tinggi area here, turned out to be the reason for a massive flood, forcing over 1,000 people to seek shelter at relief centres.

KANGAR: The RM260 million Timah Tasoh West Flood Diversion, which was supposed to solve floods in Tebing Tinggi area here, turned out to be the reason for a massive flood, forcing over 1,000 people to seek shelter at relief centres.

The project, which was scheduled to be completed in the middle of this year, has suffered a delay and the new deadline has been pushed to November.

Residents were left fuming as the final part of the 22 kilometer canal, which links a water tunnel from Tebing Tinggi to Bukit Wai, became the reason for the worst flood in recent years.

The canal is supposed to channel running water from Timah Tasoh Dam directly to the Straits of Malacca near Kuala Perlis river mouth.

The continuous rainfall over the past two days left some areas, which have never been flooded before, to be submerged up to 1.5-metre deep.

As at noon today, 1,008 people from 277 families, mostly from Tebing Tinggi, were forced to seek shelter at the flood relief centres.

Kangar member of Parliament Ir Shaharuddin Ismail said the project delay had left the area exposed to flood disaster every time there was a heavy downpour.

He said this had not happened before the project started.



The RM260 million Timah Tasoh West Flood Diversion, which was supposed to solve floods in Tebing Tinggi area here, turned out to be the reason for a massive flood, forcing over 1,000 people to seek shelter at relief centres. Pix by Azhar Ramli

"I am urging the state government, the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) and the contractor concerned to expedite the project. If the contractor is unable to complete the project, might as well just terminate the contractor," he told reporters after visiting the site today.

Meanwhile, Tebing Tinggi residents who were taking refuge at SK Bintong, appealed to the relevant authorities to complete the project as soon as possible.

Mahidah Ismail, 40, said her house had never been flooded even during continuous rainfall like over the past two days.

"Since the project started my house has been hit by flash floods. The water used to reach up to knee-level but now it has reached waist-level," she said.

Her neighbour Norhidah Mohmad, 56, said she could no longer stand the hassle of having to abandon her home every time there was heavy rain and having to clean up the house several times.

The flood had also forced a trunk road linking Wang Ulu to Kuala Perlis to be closed to traffic while a petrol station in Arau has to suspend its operation.

It was reported that the project, which had been completed 80 per cent, was suffering a delay following a technical problem at Bukit Wai as the contractor was having difficulties in building a tunnel.

11. top order issued on all logging activities near Fraser's Hill



The Pahang Forestry Department has issued a stop order on all logging activities near Fraser's Hill here.

RAUB: The Pahang Forestry Department has issued a stop order on all logging activities near Fraser's Hill here.

In a statement issued today, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said that the order, issued on Sept 8, covers the removal of logs and the construction of roads to logging sites.

He said the order was issued pursuant to opposition raised by the Association for the Protection of the Natural Heritage of Malaysia (Peka) president Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil.

"The area that has become the point of (contention) by (Peka) is a logging area, measuring 106.78 hectares, (of) government land.

"The government land comprises mining lots within the Batu Talam Forest Reserve, which form part of Compartment 213 and 214. The height of the area is around 950 metres above sea level," he said.

Junaidi noted that the logging areas are just 15 kilometres from Fraser's Hill.

He said that two forest reserves near the holiday hotspot are the Batu Talam Forest Reserve (61,888 hectares) and the Trantum Forest Reserve (2,701 hectares).

"The Pahang Forestry Department licensed the area, with the Licence Number *CC-02-3-2017 (KP/K), effective July 15, 2017 until Jan 14, 2018.

"Initial checks by the Pahang Forestry Department on Sept 12, 2017 found that works that have been carried out in the area only involved construction of a road of around 1.7 kilometres in length.

"The contractor had also removed machinery from the area on Sept 13, 2017. Only broken machinery and vehicles were not removed from the area," he said.

On Sept 14, Shariffa had said that Peka opposes any logging activities at the base of Fraser's Hill, near Kampung Bukit Telaga, an Orang Asli village.

She expressed worry that the logging activities would jeopardise the environmental integrity of Fraser's Hill and surrounding areas.

12. Zainal insists RM2 billion allocation for Penang flood mitigation projects true



State Federal Action Council chairman Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin Osman said Lim and Chow's statement questioning his statement on Wednesday was made with a bad intention to confuse the people and raise suspicions against the Federal government and him.

GEORGE TOWN: State Federal Action Council chairman Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin Osman today slammed Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and state Flood Mitigation committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow for being ignorant of the flood mitigation projects in the state carried out by the Federal government.

Zainal said Lim and Chow's statement questioning his statement on Wednesday was made with a bad intention to confuse the people and raise suspicions against the Federal government and him.

He said his statement about the RM2 billion allocation was true and not a false allegation.

"The Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar had also confirmed the RM2 billion allocation for flood mitigation projects.

"Lim and Chow's statement that the allocation had yet to be released by Federal government is a ridiculous and unwise statement as well as portraying them as ignorant of what is happening in the state.

"I would like to inform Lim that the allocation was not washed away with the flood waters but what was washed away with the waters were Lim's own false promises," he said in a statement issued today.

Zainal then detailed the flood mitigation projects under Malaysia Plan (RMK) 9, RMK10, RMK11.

"Under RMK9 (2005-2010) there were 10 projects completed with an allocation of RM1,483,500,000. Among the projects are Kepala Batas, Sungai Junjung and Sungai Perai flood mitigation project.

"While under RMK 10 (2011 -2015) a total of 11 projects were carried out with an allocation of RM404,550,000.

Among the projects include Bertam, Tasek Gelugor and Sungai Kerian flood mitigation project, some of which is still ongoing and expected to be completed this year," he said.

Zainal said under RMK 11(2016-2020) the federal government had approved RM150 million allocation for the Sungai Pinang flood mitigation project.

"The contractors for the project had been appointed and we expect the works to start end of this year.

Zainal said without these allocation, the flood problems in the state would have been much worst especially in the areas that flood mitigation projects had been carried out.

"It is very embarrassing when a chief minister and flood mitigation committee chairman themselves did not know about the flood mitigation projects in the state, especially since every other agencies knew about it.

"I ask Lim and Chow to check with the state Drainage and Irrigation Department against before making baseless allegation."he said.

13. Minister's political aide nabbed by MACC over PTPK embezzlement probe



MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said more arrests would be made if the need arises, depending on the graft buster's investigation into a political secretary of the Human Resources Minister, who was arrested today

KEPALA BATAS: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has not ruled out more arrest over its probe into misappropriation of government funds.

MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said more arrests would be made if the need arises, depending on the graft buster's investigation into a political secretary of the Human Resources Minister, who was arrested today.

The 61-year-old man, a Datuk, was arrested when he went to the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya at 12.30pm today to have his statement recorded.

The man is a member of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), attached to its Serian branch.

"I can confirm that we have arrested the fifth person in our probe into misappropriation of government funds. He is the politics secretary of a ministry.

"We will bring him to the court tomorrow to apply for a remand order.

"And if there is a need to arrest more people (as investigation progresses), we will do so," he said when asked on the latest arrest into the embezzlement of funds totalling up to RM40 million allocated by the Federal government between 2016 and 2017, to provide skills training programmes for the unemployed.

Sources said the man is being investigated for alleged misappropriation of allocation channeled into the Skills Development Fund Corporation (PTPK).

"We suspect that he may be involved in misappropriating the allocation.

"We will investigate further to determine his involvement," the source added.

Earlier this month, four people were arrested at several locations in Kuala Lumpur. They have since been released.

The four included a 58-year-old Datuk, who is PTPK chief executive; PTPK secretary, 34; PTPK assistant finance officer, 32; and a company director, 38.

It was believed that they had aided the director in embezzling funds totaling up to RM40 million allocated by the Federal government between 2016 and 2017, to provide skills training programmes for the unemployed.

Preliminary investigation suggested that they had embezzled RM15 million in 2016 and RM25 million this year.

The PTPK was established in June 2006 under the Skills Development Fund Act 2004 (Act 640) to manage the Skills Development Fund, which was previously run by the Skills Development Fund Division under the Human Resources Ministry.

14. MACC to meet Guan Eng soon over Sungai Lembu illegal factory probe



Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng will be called up by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to record his statement to aid its probe into an illegal carbon filter factory in Sungai Lembu. Pic by AMIR IRSYAD OMAR

KEPALA BATAS: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will record Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's statement to aid its probe into an illegal carbon filter factory in Sungai Lembu.

MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said the commission would meet with Lim soon.

"We are just waiting to record the chief minister's statement.

"The case is in the final stages of investigation," he told newsmen today.

Dzulkifli was met at the Gerakan Revolusi Anti-Rasuah (Gerah) nationwide tour at SK Hashim Awang.

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

State Environment Committee chairman Phee Bon Poh was arrested the following day. Also detained were the factory's 70-year-old manager and the latter's 37-year-old son, a director.

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.

15. RM7 million grant for farmers, breeders and fishermen



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak launch the National Farmers, Breeders and Fishermen's Day 2017 (HPPNK2017) and Malaysia Food Festival at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang with Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek. The HPPNK2017 which has the theme 'Our Food, Our Future' held for four days, from Sept 28 to Oct 1.

SERDANG: Grants, amounting to RM7 million would be disbursed to benefit one million farmers, breeders and fishermen Farmers Organisation and Fishermen's Organisation, nationwide.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the allocation would see each Area Farmers Organisation and Area Fishermen's Organisation receiving RM30,000 respectively.

The country has 278 area farmers organisations and 88 area fishermen's organisations.

The grant was provided in appreciation of the efforts of those who supplied the nation's food, he said in his speech at the launch of the National Farmers, Breeders and Fishermen's Day 2017 (HPPNK2017) and Malaysia Food Festival at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang here, today.

"Toiling as farmers, breeders and fishermen to provide the people with food is a noble task and the contribution of these groups of people, who are dear to me, must be honoured," he said.

Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, said the grants, which had been approved by the Finance Ministry, would revitalise the leadership of area farmers and fishermen's organisations to bring further development to the respective sectors.

Present were Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, and Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek were also present.

The HPPNK2017 which has the theme 'Our Food, Our Future' held for four days, from Sept 28 to Oct 1 at The Malaysia Agro Exposition Park, Serdang.

HPPNK is celebrated every year on Aug 6 since 1975 when it was launched by Najib's father and second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak.

Organised by the Agricultural and Agro-based Industry Ministry, the events is expected to welcome nearly one million visitors and transactions up to RM30 million with 600 exhibitors.

Najib said in 2016, the Agriculture sector contributed RM89.3 billion or 8.1 per cent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while the agro-food sector contributed RM36.5 billion or 3.3 per cent to the GDP.

He also said that the production of major food commodities such as paddy, vegetables, fruits, meat and fish registered an encouraging growth of 3.9 per cent per annum from 2011 to 2016.

Najib also announced that the Agricultural and Agro-based Industry Ministry has been given the responsibility to coordinate the National Food Bank programme via the National Blue Ocean Strategy.

This, he said this was to ensure that it is implemented successfully and would see the participation of the relevant stakeholders.

"Our challenge is to make this sector the new source of wealth for the people.

"We have to look at the potential that we have yet to make a reality, however, we can already see the indications now.

He said that Malaysia had already attained 100 per cent self-sufficiency for the production of meat as well as chicken and duck eggs, while more than 70 per cent of fish, fruits and rice had been achieved.

Najib also made a special mention of the new successfully produced coconut variety named Careca and Matag that is capable of contributing to the national economy.

"This hybrid variety can produce up to 35,000 coconuts per hectare, making the coconut cultivation industry able to be a new source of wealth for you all (the farmers and fishermen).

"In addition to that, it is a high yielding fruit with a tasty flavour. This type of coconut is also easily harvested because the tree is low, standing at about six metres high," he said

Najib also praised the ministry's effort to promote local food and agricultural products on the national scale including the "Farm to Fork" concept.

On this note, Najib announced that he has also given the mandate to ministry to explore and further develop the culinary industry.

"Proper planning needs to be done to integrate food production at all stages, from the farm until the various food outlets available such as cafes, restaurants, food trucks, drive-thru as well as online food delivery services.

16. JITN has no power to influence MACC probes



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuang attending Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (SIAP) Open Day and SIAP Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

PUTRAJAYA: The Department of National Integrity and Good Governance (JITN), to be established soon, would not have any power to influence the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) investigations, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuang.

"Not only the MACC, they also include the Malaysian Institute of Integrity (IIM), Malaysia Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) and the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (SIAP) because these are all independent institutions," he said.

Met by reporters after launching SIAP's Open Day and SIAP Strategic Plan 2017-2022 here today, Low said the proposed JITN was to lead the transformational change in building the institutional capacity, especially among civil servants, to initiate and drive policy changes and to strengthen government processes.

On Monday, Low said JITN was being upgraded from the Integrity and Good Governance Division under the Prime Minister's Department into a full department.

In a statement yesterday, Low said the establishment of JITN was currently being finalised by the Public Service Department in consultation with all the relevant agencies to ensure there was no duplication in function and to improve the effective use of resources and manpower.

Low said the establishment of JITN was approved by the Cabinet on July 28, in line with the Government Transformation Programme, for the institutionalisation of compliance initiatives in the areas of governance, integrity and human rights.

Earlier, SIAP chairman Datuk Yaacob Md Sam, in his speech, said the SIAP Strategic Plan 2017-2022 was the body's effort, apart from the MACC's, towards strengthening the integrity of enforcement agencies and officers as they had been given that responsibility.

"This strategic plan has four main thrusts with formulated actions to be undertaken by SIAP within the five-year period," he said.

The thrusts are strengthening the service delivery in managing complaints and investigations; the laws and procedures; education and prevention, and making integrity a culture; and strengthening the organisation's capacity and capability.

"This plan will also form the guideline for SIAP's moves in all the planning, programmes and activities carried out in preparing SIAP to face the challenges ahead in tandem with the country's progress and development, and global changes," said Yaacob.

17. JITN may duplicate efforts, duties carried out by MACC, says Lam Thye



Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation (MCPF) senior vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye

KUALA LUMPUR: The Federal government has been asked to reconsider its proposal to establish the National Integrity and Good Governance Department (JITN).

Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation (MCPF) senior vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said the setting up of the department ought to be reconsidered as it might duplicate the efforts and responsibilities carried out by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

Lee said although he was not against the government's move to promote integrity, he did not see the rationale of having too many bodies serving the same purpose.

"This is my personal view. I am all for integrity and I am all for the fight against corruption.

"I am not against efforts of the government in promoting integrity... but having too many bodies with the same objective may create a lot of duplication.

"Whatever resources being utilised for the setting up of this department can and should actually be channelled to MACC as this will beef up the commission," he said, adding that this would be the best arrangement as the commission was action-oriented now and had been doing a good job in fighting corruption.

Last Monday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuang announced that the cabinet had, on July 28, approved the upgrade of JITN to become a full-fledged department.

It was also reported that the setting up of JITN was being "finalised" by the Public Service Department to ensure that there were no duplications in functions and that it was to improve the effective use of resources and manpower.

The MACC has opposed the move, saying that it was unnecessary.

Its chief commissioner, Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad, said the establishment of JITN could create an overlap in functions of existing agencies.

He added that the government should instead utilise its funds to upgrade the salary scheme and welfare of civil servants.