

## 1. Petronas weighs sale to exit \$27 bln Canada LNG project



KUALA LUMPUR/MILAN: Malaysian state oil firm Petroliaam Nasional Bhd is considering selling its majority stake in a \$27 billion Canadian liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant, three people familiar with the matter said this week.

Petronas, as the company is known, said in a statement on Saturday that it "categorically denied" the Reuters report on Friday that the company is considering the stake sale.

"Petronas reiterates that, together with the project partners, it will study the conditions that come with the approval and conduct a total review of the project prior to making a decision on the next steps forward," the company said in a statement on Saturday.

Petronas is weighing options for the project as a more than 50 percent slide in crude oil prices since the middle of 2014 has hit the group's profits and prompted cuts to capital expenditure and jobs.

Amid the cost-cutting, the economics of the Canadian project - which took three years to get approval due to environment concerns - have been called into question as LNG prices have fallen more than 70 percent in two years.

Petronas was given the go-ahead for the C\$36 billion (\$27.34 billion) project by the Canadian government earlier this week. It said then that executives would study the 190 conditions imposed by the authorities and conduct a review before deciding on the next steps.

The sources said Petronas has been considering a sale for months, after it became apparent that a

Canadian approval was possible, but had yet to take a final decision. Other options are also being considered, including putting it on ice.

"They are going to be looking at gas prices, costs and returns before they make the final decision," said one of the sources. "It is a very tough call."

The Canadian project is Petronas' biggest foreign investment and seen as a sign of Malaysia's global energy ambitions. An exit would underscore the financial constraints at the state-run firm and also the soft outlook for LNG prices.

Last month, Petronas reported an 85 percent slide in second-quarter profit and labelled the industry outlook "gloomy" well into 2017. It has committed to paying 16 billion ringgit to the government coffers this year, down nearly 40 percent from its year-ago contribution.

#### TOUGH SELL

Petronas signed on for the project in 2012 through the acquisition of Canada's Progress Energy.

It has faced several hurdles. Aboriginal and environmental groups have said the project would threaten a salmon habitat. The LNG price decline added to concerns, and there is also a growing supply glut as other projects went live.

If Petronas goes ahead with a sale, finding a buyer in current market conditions would be difficult, the sources said.

Petronas was considering its options as far back as a year ago, a separate industry source said, but he added it would be difficult to sell in the current environment given that Canadian projects are more expensive.

If Petronas opts to suspend the Canada project, it would be put on ice until gas prices begin to turn around and Petronas is confident of securing long-term contracts at reasonable prices, said the sources, who declined to be identified as the negotiations are not public.

Other LNG projects in British Columbia have also faced delays, underlining the market outlook. In July, Royal Dutch Shell and its partners pushed back a decision on building an LNG export terminal, and Chevron has delayed the scheduled 2017 start of its Kitimat LNG project.

Petronas has minority partners for the project in China, India, Japan and Brunei. - Reuters

## **2. MACC seizes RM52mil cash in Sabah Water Dept probe**



**The cash and jewelleries being displayed at the press conference at the MACC office in Kota Kinabalu**

KOTA KINABALU: Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) made its biggest cash seizure ever following the arrest of two senior Sabah Water Department officials on Tuesday.

MACC deputy chief commissioner of operations Datuk Azam Baki said RM52mil of the cash were seized from various places, including from the officials' office and house.

He said the bank accounts of the officers, amounting to RM60mil, had been frozen. Nine luxury vehicles, 94 high-end handbags, jewelleries and luxury watches were also seized.

The two officers, a 54-year-old director and his 51-year-old deputy, were nabbed at their offices on Tuesday.

Two others, the deputy director's 55-year-old businessman brother, who is a Datuk, and his accountant, 50, were also arrested.

Azam said it is believed that more money were kept in banks in a neighbouring country. He refused to give details.

Earlier Wednesday, the four people were remanded for a week to facilitate investigations into kickbacks involving RM3.3bil worth of federal projects.

**3. Two top Sabah Water Dept officers remanded over kickbacks from RM3.3bil project**



**The Sabah Water Dept director (right) and his deputy outside the Magistrate's court in Kota Kinabalu**

KOTA KINABALU: Two senior officers of the Sabah Water Department and two others have been remanded to facilitate investigations into alleged kickbacks involving RM3.3bil worth of federal projects.

The 54-year-old director, his 51-year-old deputy and 55-year-old businessman brother, who is a Datuk, and his accountant, 50, were brought to the Magistrate's court here on Wednesday.

Magistrate Stephanie Sherron Abbie allowed an application by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission investigating officer Mohd Faliq for the four people to be remanded for seven days.

On Tuesday, some RM3mil worth of cash were seized from the safe of one of the officers along with seven luxury vehicles belonging to them.

The MACC has frozen three bank accounts belonging to the director, the deputy and the Datuk in their investigations.

#### **4. MACC to probe involvement of Sabah VIPs in water graft case**

KOTA KINABALU: MACC is investigating possible links between Sabah VIPs and the Water Department officials who had allegedly amassed over RM115mil through kickbacks and the abuse of power.

MACC sources, however, said that it was still premature to say if there were any links between VIPs and the director and deputy director of the state Water Department who might have been operating on their own.

Even Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman had to step in to put an end to the speculation linking the graft case to Kimanis Umno and himself.

"It is preposterous and false. Umno Kimanis and I are not in anyway implicated in the case under investigation. Let MACC do their job fairly and properly without interference," Anifah, who is also Kimanis MP, said in a statement.

He also threatened to take action if the defamatory statements continued to be published.

The alleged Kimanis Umno links immediately surfaced as both the director and his deputy director were locals from the Beaufort and Kimanis area of Membakut with many falsely claiming in an online post that the water director was a treasurer of Kimanis Umno.

In an earlier statement on Friday, Sabah infrastructure development minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan also said that RM3.3bil worth of federal projects allocated since 2010 were done during the time of former Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, who was dropped in 2015.

Meanwhile, MACC continued recording statements of another 11 witnesses from the Water Department and related contractors.

**5. Tenom MP: Include Federal-level officials in RM114mil graft probe**



KOTA KINABALU: Tenom MP Datuk Raime Unggi (pic) says the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) should widen its probe into the RM114mil graft and investigate Federal-level ministry officials as well.

He said the scope of the investigations should be widened as the approving authority for the projects was at the Federal ministry level.

"It would be strange if the ministry was not aware of the accumulation of massive wealth by two individuals," said Raime.

He said it was a practice for Federal ministries to directly appoint contractors without any involvement of the state government.

On Friday, Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kiringan said the state had nothing to do with the RM3.3bil Federal Government allocation to the Sabah Water Department, from which a large amount has been siphoned off.

Pairin, the Sabah Infrastructure Development Minister, said the projects allocated since 2010 came under the Federal-level Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

Former Umno vice president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal held the Rural Development portfolio until 2015, when he was dropped from the Cabinet.



#### 6. Shafie ready to assist in Sabah Water Dept graft probe



KOTA KINABALU: Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal (*pic*) says he is ready to assist the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) in their investigations into the biggest corruption case involving two top Sabah Water Department officers.

"If it is requested for me to assist in the investigations, I am more than willing to cooperate and give my assistance in any manner that I can," said the former rural and regional development minister in a statement here Saturday.

However, he was puzzled by the state government's "haste" in pleading ignorance on the alleged corrupt practices by the two senior Department officials involving siphoning of federal allocations amounting to RM3.3bil for water projects in Sabah.

"It is quiet perplexing and amusing that the state authority are in a haste to plead their innocence publicly and diverting the blame to the Rural and Regional Development Ministry when the investigation by the MACC is still ongoing," he said in response to Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan's statement that the state was unaware of federal funds being siphoned off between 2010 and 2015.

The former Umno vice-president, who declined to comment on the ongoing MACC investigations, said such statements seem to show no respect nor confidence in MACC's handling of the investigations.

"Pairin had indicated that the projects was not handled by his ministry. I would reserve my comment on this matter," he said.

Pairin, is the Sabah Infrastructure Minister, whose portfolio includes the Sabah Water Department.

Shafie said that no one should interfere or be seen to be interfering with ongoing investigations by making public statements or pleading innocence, to ensure that the integrity of the investigation by MACC is not compromised.

Shafie quit Umno earlier this year to form his own Sabah-based party.



#### 7. MACC questions 23 in connection with RM114mil graft case



KOTA KINABALU: The Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) has so far questioned 23 people in connection with the seizure of more than RM114mil worth of cash and properties from two Sabah Water Department officials.

Sources said among those quizzed was a younger sibling of Department director Ag Tahir Ag Talib, who was arrested along with his deputy Teoh Chee Kong on Oct 4.

The sources said no further arrests had been made in connection with the case so far, said to be the nation's largest power abuse, corruption and money-laundering investigation.

They said Ag Tahir and Teo were expected to assist the MACC in repatriating money kept in several banks overseas under the Mutual Legal Assistance scheme.



"We will be calling in Lands and Survey Department officials on Oct 10 to value the 127 land titles seized in our operations," the officials said.

They said the land titles involved were those for housing, agriculture and commercial purposes throughout Sabah.

The sources said their checks had also revealed that the luxury vehicle seized from Ag Tahir had been bought under the name of a company owned by a younger sibling.

The investigators have also discovered that Teo had purchased a house in another country.

"Our investigations are now also focused on a company that was managing the cash flow of the deputy director," the sources said.

When contacted, MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the details of their probe so far, but declined to elaborate.

MACC investigators had seized among others RM53.7mil in cash from houses and offices of Ag Tahir and Teo in addition from jewellery worth more than RM3.6mil.

It has been reported that the Department's tender process had been fixed so that proxy companies would get projects.

Azam Baki had confirmed that there were 38 companies owned by family and friends of the two detained civil servants.

Of these 17 of the firms were said were connected to the director while 21 were linked to his deputy.

These companies are said to have been used as fronts to take part in limited tenders to secure the projects.

**8. Shafie: Other agencies also involved in channelling funds for water projects**



KOTA KINABALU: The RM3.3bil in federal funds for water supply projects in the centre of a massive corruption, power abuse and money laundering probe was channelled to Sabah through various federal agencies, former Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said.

He said apart from the ministry that he had headed, other agencies included the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry as well as the Prime Minister's Department.

Describing claims that the funds came solely from the Rural and Regional Development Ministry as politically motivated and with malicious intent, Shafie said he was surprised by the allegations of his "friend" Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan.

He said the National Audit Department had found that the Rural Development Ministry had a 95% achievement as stated in its 2015 report.

"If there was any wrongdoing, I am certain the Auditor-General would have asked the ministry to explain," he told the media Sunday.

Pairin had said on Friday that the Sabah government had nothing to do with the RM3.3bil federal allocation because it was directly channelled to the state water department from the ministry.

"I have known Pairin for several decades now and regard him as a friend with a long tenure of administrative experience, and I am surprised that he specifically made some malicious inference when he mentioned that the projects allegedly connected to the corruption scandals were awarded in 2010 during my tenure at the ministry," he said.

"What is even more surprising is that he qualified his statement on the projects by specifically throwing malicious inferences that the projects were not handled by his state ministry," Shafie added.

"Do not accuse me without proof. But let the investigation run its course, and investigate it properly. I am categorically denying any allegation and inference of my involvement and or my former ministry's involvement in the shocking alleged corrupt acts," he said.

Asked what he thought could be the motive for the allegations, Shafie said he believes they are due to politics.

Stating that he did not know department director Ag Tahir Ag Talib and his deputy Teo Chee Kong, he said it is best to "let the evidence prevail."

Graft busters arrested Ag Tahir and Teo on Oct 4 and found more than RM114mil in cash, jewellery and other assets in their houses and offices.

In a related development, MACC investigators have questioned another five individuals in what has been reported to be biggest corruption probe in the country so far.

MACC sources said investigators had so far questioned 28 people, including the owners of companies involved in contracts with the Sabah Water Department.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the details of the probe so far but declined to elaborate.



Monday, 10 October 2016

#### **9. Sabah Water Dept duo had RM30mil in land titles, RM30mil in bank accounts**

KOTA KINABALU: The 127 land titles seized from Sabah Water Department deputy director Teo Chee Kong, who was arrested with his director Ag Tahir Ag Talib for alleged massive corruption, are valued at RM30mil.

The land grants and titles for agriculture, commercial and housing plots were valued by the state Land and Survey Department, sources said.

They have also discovered some RM30mil in bank accounts held by the two in three countries.

About RM29mil of the overseas money was in Teo's accounts while the remaining RM1mil was in the account of Ag Tahir, the sources said Monday.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) deputy chief commissioner Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the valuation of the land titles and the discovery of the money overseas.

He said investigators have so far questioned 40 witnesses directly involved in the contracts and implementation of the RM3.3bil federal allocation for water projects.

He said they would be seeking to further remand the two senior officials and the deputy director's brother and his accountant for further questioning.

They were arrested on Oct 4 and their remand ends Tuesday.



Thursday, 13 October 2016

#### 10. MACC: Don't cause rift with police



PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is concerned that some parties are seeking to tarnish the image of the agency and drive a wedge between MACC and the police.

This follows after a video has been circulating on social media of a police officer being beaten by a man said to be an MACC officer.

MACC deputy commissioner of operations Datuk Azam Baki denied the involvement of the MACC.

"MACC is concerned that some parties are trying to tarnish the image of MACC in the eyes of society, and seems to be trying to drive a wedge between MACC and the police," said Azam in a statement on Thursday.

He said that the Commission had lodged a police report in Johor Baru on Thursday.

Azam also urged the public not to spread the video in question, as it can cause confusion.

The 39-second video that is believed to have occurred at a petrol station in Johor showed an MACC officer detaining a police officer.



Friday, 14 October 2016

#### **11. Sabah MOF technical and engineering advisor held under Ops Water**

KOTA KINABALU: A Sabah Finance Ministry technical and engineering advisor has been arrested under Ops Water - the ongoing investigations into power abuse and corruption in the Sabah Water Department.

The suspect, who retired as a deputy director of the department last year and was appointed an adviser to the state ministry, was picked from his office Thursday, graft investigators said.

The sources said they also seized a Mercedes Benz and a Toyota Land Cruiser from the suspect, who is believed to be another key figure in the massive siphoning of federal allocations for water projects worth RM3.3bil since 2010.

He is the fifth person arrested by Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission investigators, who have seized more than RM190mil - RM57mil of it in cash - as well as gold and property and frozen bank accounts of the director and deputy director of the department following their Oct 4 arrest.

The sources said the adviser is believed to have also received kickbacks, although no immediate seizures of cash has been made.

MACC deputy commissioner for operations Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the latest arrest but declined further comment.

The investigators have obtained a six-day remand to hold him for further questioning in one of the biggest investigations involving abuse of power, bribery, nepotism and money laundering in the country.

The MACC has also arrested a businessman - who is the elder brother of the deputy director - and his company accountant under Ops Water.



Friday, 14 October 2016

#### **12. Transport Ministry approves RM700mil Mentakab-Tumpat track upgrade**

KOTA BARU: Travellers can expect a smoother journey between Mentakab, Pahang and Tumpat, Kelantan after the Transport Ministry approved a RM700mil upgrade to railway tracks between the two towns.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the track upgrade was needed so newer locomotives could ply the route.

"A total of 30 new locomotives will be bought to increase the speed from 90kmh to 110kmh," he said after officiating the Kelantan MCA annual general meeting here on Friday.

Liow also said that the massive floods in 2014 had washed away almost all rail links from Gua Musang to Kuala Krai in Kelantan, which tracks had since been replaced and upgraded.

Liow also said that the Government would eventually upgrade the railways tracks from Gemas, Negri Sembilan to Mentakab, Pahang, but did not specify a time frame.



Wednesday, 19 October 2016

#### **13. DiCaprio foundation will return gifts from 1MDB**

NEW YORK: Oscar-winner Leonardo DiCaprio's charitable foundation will return gifts or donations made to him or his ventures if they were found to have come from 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), which is being investigated on money-laundering allegations, his representatives said on Tuesday.



In his first comment on the multinational probe into the fund, DiCaprio said he was cooperating with U.S. authorities to determine if money had come from questionable sources, according to the statement.

In July a Hollywood production company was accused in a U.S. civil lawsuit of using US\$100mil (RM418mil) that prosecutors said had been diverted from the 1MDB fund to finance DiCaprio's 2013 film *The Wolf of Wall Street*, in which he starred.

In a statement on Tuesday, DiCaprio's representatives said he had first learned of the probe through press reports in July.

"He immediately had his representatives reach out to the Department of Justice to determine whether he or his foundation, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF), ever received any gifts or charitable donations directly or indirectly related to these parties, and if so, to return those gifts or donations as soon as possible," the statement said.

"All contact was initiated by Mr. DiCaprio and LDF," it said.

The production company, Red Granite Pictures, has said that to its knowledge, none of the money it received was illegitimate and that it had done nothing wrong.

The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, set up in 1998, supports a range of environmental projects.

In August, the *Hollywood Reporter* published a story alleging that the actor's foundation had benefited to the tune of some US\$2mil (RM8.37mil) from cash and in-kind donations made by a Malaysian financier, who was named in the U.S. lawsuit as being involved in the creation of the 1MDB fund.

The actor, who won an Oscar in 2016 for his role in *The Revenant*, is also a United Nations climate change "messenger of peace," but he has come under pressure from some environmental activists to step down from the role following the 1MDB issue.

DiCaprio's representatives said in Tuesday's statement that he had refrained from speaking about the matter until now "out of respect for (the) ongoing investigation, which has touched many charities, hospitals and individuals, who may have been unwitting recipients of funds now in question."

#### **14. Sabah water probe: 19 engineers detained, RM2.4mil seized**

KOTA KINABALU: The anti-graft probe into the Sabah Water Department has widened with the arrests of 19 district or divisional engineers during a one-day operation on Wednesday.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigators seized RM2.4mil from several of those detained at 27 locations around the state.

Investigators also seized the department's procurement files and were going through these documents.

From what investigators have unearthed so far, it is believed that the divisional or district engineers were collecting as much as 27% to 30% of the contract amounts for the contractors to be awarded certain projects.

Investigators will be recording their statements.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki, when contacted Thursday, confirmed the arrests as part of *Ops Air Air-Wave II*, but declined to elaborate.

He, however, said that investigations were focused on the involvement of civil servants in receiving kickbacks and wrongful use of authority, and did not involve any political figure at the state or in the Federal Government.

"I am requesting all quarters not to politicise this matter and take advantage of the current investigations for their own particular interests," Azam added.

He said the probe involved a large number of documents which MACC officers were going through in detail, and they needed time before submitting their investigation papers to the Deputy Public Prosecutor.

"We view this case seriously and assure everyone that our investigations will be carried out transparently and professionally," Azam added.

**15. Auditor-General: Let MACC finish 'watergate' probe first**



KUALA LUMPUR: Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang (*pic*) says he has questions about the alleged graft in the Sabah Water Department, but will allow the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to conduct its own investigations first.

"In this fraud case, I am interested to know how they (the perpetrators) did it, and the only people who know about this is the MACC and they have not yet finished their work," Ambrin told reporters when met after closing the Open Government Partnership Conference here Thursday.

He said he would wait for the MACC complete its work before deciding whether to then follow up with an audit on the state water department.

"We'll see," he said when asked whether he would audit the department after the MACC finishes its investigations.

Ambrin said that among the questions which he is personally interested to know about are how exactly the perpetrators managed to commit such fraud.

"This is about procurement, so how was the procurement handled? Who handled the procurement?"

"If the money came from the ministry, was it then sent to a state ministry or the department?"

"These are the things we want to know. And who selected the contractors?"

On a separate matter, Ambrin was asked whether he would declassify the Auditor-General's Report on 1Malaysia Development Bhd.

He replied that the decision is now with the Public Accounts Committee.

"It is the PAC which made the decision for our report not to go public, so (it remains) unless they (PAC) have a change of mind."



Friday, 21 October 2016

#### **16. Budget 2017: Govt to continue reducing oil, gas dependency**

PETALING JAYA: The Government will reduce its dependency on income from the oil and gas sector and diversify its sources of revenue, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"The Government intends to reduce its dependency on income from the the oil and gas sector, from 41.3% in 2009 to 14.6% in 2017," said Najib in his [Budget 2017](#) speech Friday in the Dewan Rakyat.

Najib said economic growth continues even though world oil prices have fallen by almost 50%.

In earlier announcements, the Finance Minister had said that Budget 2017 would address the uncertain economic climate.

He said important areas of concern were housing, reducing the cost of living and other issues which the Government has identified.

Najib had also addressed the issue when announcing the revised Budget 2016 on Jan 28, saying that the recalibration was necessary due to a slump in global oil prices and slower economic growth in the United States and China.

**17. Shafie: How will 1MDB benefit the country?**



**Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal**

KUALA LUMPUR: Another former senior minister wants to know how 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) will benefit the nation compared to previous government initiatives like Proton and Malaysia Airlines (MAS).

Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal (Warisan-Semporna) said many people had condemned then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad when the Government under his administration had to bail out Proton and MAS.

"People threw accusations at Tun Dr Mahathir when he did so, but do you realise that both companies have brought many jobs to Malaysians? How many thousands are working in these companies?"

"By comparison, I don't see any other Malaysian working for 1MDB, other than (1MDB president and executive director) Arul Kanda.

"What return of investment are we getting from 1MDB?" he said while debating the Budget 2017 speech in Parliament Tuesday.

On Monday, former second finance minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah had asked if it was even necessary to set up 1MDB.

He had warned that even if Barisan Nasional wins the next general election, the country could still face economic repercussions if the 1MDB issue is not handled properly.

Mohd Shafie, who is former rural and regional development minister, congratulated Ahmad Husni for his bold statements.

He also took a swipe at those who accused him of being involved in water supply projects in Sabah, which are at the centre of a massive corruption, power abuse and money laundering probe by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

"People accused me of being involved in the scandal. I do not know who they are, let alone met them.

"People blame me now because I am with the Opposition, so this is what they do," he said.

Mohd Shafie had set up his own party, Parti Warisan Sabah, after he quit Umno in July this year.



Thursday, 27 October 2016

#### **18. MACC probes 35 embezzlement cases at T'ganu religious dept**

KUALA TERENGGANU: Terengganu Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission confirmed that 35 investigation papers have been opened on alleged embezzlement cases in the supply and installation of carpets at several mosques and suraus in the state.

MACC director P. Ganason said they were currently in the final stage of preparing the papers before submitting it to the deputy public prosecutor for further action.

"Approximately 30 witnesses comprising mainly Terengganu Religious Affairs Department (JHEAT) staff, members of the public and contractors, have been called to facilitate in the investigations since we were alerted about the case early this year," he said.

Last Tuesday, JHEAT commissioner Datuk Wan Mohd Wan Ibrahim was reported to have exposed the alleged embezzlement cases involving claims amounting over RM1mil.

Ganason said Terengganu MACC had opened 51 investigation papers concerning white-collar crimes, including corruption, misappropriation of funds and abuse of power, in the state so far.

"Of the total, 14 arrests were made and 19 individuals have been charged in courts," he said. -  
Bernama



### **19. Hospital building to undergo investigations following fire that killed six people**

JOHOR BARU: The entire west block of the main building of the Hospital Sultanah Aminah (HSA) is closed immediately following a fire that killed six people and another minor incident within 24 hours.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said this was to allow the concession company and the engineering team to inspect the block, including its wiring, utilities, biomedical gas and structure.

Most of the services in the block, he added, would be temporarily affected following the closure that was expected to last between two and four weeks.

"Some of the 477 patients warded in the block will be transferred to Hospital Sultan Ismail and Hospital Permai. We have also asked private hospitals around here to help out," he said.

Among the affected services are the intensive care unit (ICU), the blood bank, the emergency and trauma ward and other departments.

The army, Dr Subramaniam told reporters after a surprise visit to HSA here yesterday, had agreed to set up a mobile operating theatre capable of carrying out minor surgeries within the hospital grounds.

On Tuesday, fire broke out at the hospital's ICU, killing six people warded at the south wing on the second floor of the five-storey building and causing the evacuation of patients and staff.

Barely 24 hours later, an electrical spark caused smoke to engulf an operating theatre. However, no one was injured in the second incident.

Dr Subramaniam urged those who sought regular treatment at HSA to head to other public hospitals, adding that a location had also been identified in Pasir Gudang for a new general hospital. Construction is expected to begin next year.

"Once the new hospital is completed, it will ease congestion at HSA," he added.

On a report by *The Star* that there had been at least seven other fires in the hospital before the latest incidents, Dr Subramaniam said the management had taken steps against the fires before.

"I do believe that for any upgrade or renovation works being carried out in HSA, the management has adhered to the rules and regulations," he said.

## 20. Mid-level govt worker found owning 14 bungalows

ANTI-CORRUPTION officers were stunned to find that a mid-level government employee owned 14 bungalows when they investigated him for bribery.

They raided his home in Andhra Pradesh, India, and also found over a kilogram in gold, *Malaysia Nanban* reported.

Other valuables found were 60kg of silverware and cash amounting to two million rupees (RM125,000).

The 55-year-old man, who works with the district traffic board, has been a government employee for 35 years. He claimed that he had accumulated his wealth through savings from his salary.

> A woman in Seremban was admitted to hospital after a cooking gas cylinder exploded in her house, *Makkal Osai* reported.

B. Sumathi, 60, was cooking at the back of the house when her neighbour heard an explosion and a woman screaming.

The neighbour found that the kitchen was on fire. When she looked through the back window, she was shocked to see Sumathi engulfed in flames. With the help of other neighbours, the fire was put out.

According to the neighbours, the victim told them she was trying to boil some water when the blast happened.

*Found in translation is compiled from the vernacular newspapers (Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil dailies). As such, stories are grouped according to the respective language/medium. Where a paragraph begins with a >, it denotes a separate news item.*

## **21. Penang wants speedy approval of RM360mil flood mitigation project funds**

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang state government has urged the Federal Government to expedite the approval of a RM350mil allocation for the second phase of the Sungai Pinang flood mitigation project here in the wake of Saturday's floods here.

Penang Local Government, Traffic Management and Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said the flash floods that hit various places along Sungai Pinang and its tributaries highlighted the importance for the project's immediate implementation.

"The first phase was completed more than 10 years ago. However, the second phase could not proceed because of the failure to get an allocation from the Federal Government," he said in a press statement on Sunday.

Chow claimed that the state government had raised the matter with the prime minister and minister in charge many times since 2008 but had yet to get the money.

He said the state drainage and irrigation department had already resettled more than 200 families living along the Sungai Pinang river reserve for the second phase to be implemented.

"The state government urges the Federal Government to quickly approve the RM350mil allocation to solve the flood problems along the Sungai Pinang basin, which is an important basin as it passes through places with high residential and development density like Paya Terubong, Bandar Baru Air Itam, Jalan Air Itam, Jalan Lumba Kuda, the Jelutong area including Jalan P. Ramlee, Jalan Dato Keramat dan Jalan Sungai Pinang," he added.

## **22. Finance Ministry: 1MDB debt not part of national debt**

KUALA LUMPUR: The debts of 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and its related projects are not classified as national debt, said the Finance Ministry.

In a written response to Teresa Kok (DAP-Seputeh) in the Dewan Rakyat, the Ministry added that any debt incurred by the state investment arm did not contribute to the national debt.

In her question, Kok had asked the ministry to state the total national debt from the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between Sept 30 2015 and Sept 30 2016.

She had also asked the ministry to state the total debt contributed by 1MDB and its related projects.

The Finance Ministry said the current national debt as of June 2016 stood at RM655.7bil or 53.2% of the GDP.

"From that amount, 95.9% or RM628.8bil is domestic debt (51% from GDP) while 4.1% or RM26.9bil (2.2 from GDP) is in the form of offshore loans," it explained.

In comparison to June 2015, the ministry said the national debt stood at RM627.5bil or 54.2% from the GDP.

"Our current debt level is still under control, and it has been categorised as moderate," it said.