

The Star May 2017

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1. Immigration Dept: No wrongdoing over arrests of 29 workers at outlet



PETALING JAYA: The Immigration Department has denied any wrongdoing when its officers arrested 29 workers, including a Malaysian, at a South Korean restaurant chain outlet.

Immigration Department director-general Datuk Seri Mustafar Ali (*pix*) said the department should not be blamed for carrying out its responsibilities and employers must face the consequences for flouting the law.

"Our checks revealed that many foreign workers have been hired as frontliners such as cashiers, sales assistants and waiters. Employers know that this is not allowed.

"We are disappointed that employers have trivialised this rule and dare to break the law, all for short-term gains," he said in a statement on Monday, adding that such an attitude could lead to the increase of illegal immigrants in the country.

During its operations on Friday, the department arrested 28 of the restaurant's foreign workforce, who were mostly from Bangladesh and the Philippines, under Section 6(1)(c) of the Immigration Act for allegedly failing to produce valid documents at a mall in Kuala Lumpur.

Other workers arrested were from Myanmar, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan.

The restaurant's Malaysian manager was arrested for allegedly violating Section 56(1)(d) of the same Act for harbouring them.

Following the arrests, the restaurant posted the incident on social media, describing the alleged ill-treatment of its employees who it claimed were "'forced to squat by the roadside" and "treated like illegals and criminals".

The restaurant also apologised to its patrons for service disruptions during the incident.

As of 8pm Monday, over 2,000 Facebook users had reacted to the post, many of whom were angry. It was shared 714 times.

Mustafar also said the Government has given employers the opportunity to register their foreign workers through the e-Kad programme, which is open from Feb 15 until June 30.

"We will continue with our enforcement operations and action will be taken against any foreign worker or employer who are found to have broken the law," he added.

2. MACC detains two top Malacca mosque officials for alleged bribery

PETALING JAYA: Two top committee members of Masjid Al-Hamideen in Malacca have been picked up by anti-graft officers over allegations of bribery.

The amount involved was about RM116,000 when both suspects were still holding the positions of chairman and secretary of the mosque.

Sources said the suspects, aged 61 and 46, were said to have accepted the bribes to dispose of a piece of land (tanah wakaf) in Kampung Bukit Cina belonging to the mosque to a non-Muslim.

Under the law, non-Muslims are not allowed to acquire such designated plots of land near a prime area.

Both suspects were summoned to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) office in Malacca at about 7pm on Tuesday to have their statements recorded over the case.

They were detained shortly after and will be investigated under Section 16 (a)(A) of the MACC Act 2009 and Section 405 of the Penal Code.

MACC director of investigations Datuk Simi Abd Ghani confirmed the arrests and said that both suspects would be held overnight at the MACC office in Malacca and would be taken to court on Wednesday to be remanded.

Initial investigations showed that the alleged offence was said to have been committed in 2012.

Both suspects were said to have accepted the bribes and disposed of the land - placed under their charge as senior officials of the mosque - for personal gains.

3. Two to face graft charges Thursday involving RM8.8mil

PETALING JAYA: Two top officials of a private company will be charged in court on Thursday over submission of false claims amounting to nearly RM8.8mil.

They are a project director and manager of the firm, aged 61 and 48.

Both men are said to have submitted the fraudulent claims in relation to a pipe maintenance project work awarded by Petronas.

The offence was said to have been committed back in 2011.

Sources said the suspects had submitted an invoice of nearly RM14mil for the project, but its actual value was only RM5mil.

"We are also checking if both suspects are involved in similar frauds by submitting false claims involving other government-linked companies," said the source.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said they viewed such frauds involving contractors very seriously.

Azam also confirmed that the anti-graft body would be charging two suspects on Thursday but declined to elaborate.

It is learnt both suspects will face a charge under Section 16 (a)(A) of the MACC Act 2009.

The offence carries a jail term of up to 20 years, a fine of five times the amount of bribes involved or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

4. MACC looking for two individuals to assist in probes



Tan (Left) and Wu Jing

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is looking for two individuals, one with a "Datuk" title, to help with their investigations.

Tan Ewe Guan or better known as Datuk Tony Tan and Chinese national, Wu Jin are wanted by the MACC for investigations in two separate cases.

Tan is wanted to assist investigators with a case involving transaction payments with an overseas-based company.

His last known address is 81, USJ 11/3B, UEP Subang Jaya, 47400, Selangor.

Those with information about Tan can contact MACC at 03-8886 7573.

Wu Jing is wanted by Perak MACC to aid investigations into a bribery case.

Wu Jing, whose last known address is No.1/2014, Villa Pandan, Jalan Pandan Indah 1/16, Pandan Indah Ampang in Kuala Lumpur entered the country in February 2015.

Those with information about Wu Jing can contact Perak MACC at 05-5267000.

5. Two to be charged with making false claims

PETALING JAYA: Two top officials of a private company will be charged in court today over the alleged submission of false claims amounting to nearly RM8.8mil.

They are project director and manager of the firm, and are aged 61 and 48, respectively.

Both men were said to have submitted the fraudulent claims in relation to a pipe maintenance project work awarded by Petronas, with the offence said to have been committed as far back as 2011.

Sources said the suspects had submitted an invoice of nearly RM14mil for the project when the actual value of the entire project was only around RM5mil.

"We are also checking if both suspects are involved in similar frauds by submitting false claims involving other government-linked companies," said the source.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy chief commissioner for operations Datuk Azam Baki said the commission views fraud involving contractors very seriously.

He also confirmed that the anti-graft body will charge the two suspects today.

It is learnt both suspects will be charged under Section 16 (a)(A) of the MACC Act 2009.

6. GM and wife remanded in graft probe



PUTRAJAYA: A husband and wife have been remanded for five days over allegations of bribery involving them.

The two will be remanded until May 8 after magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman allowed an application by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for the couple to be held.

The husband, 54, and wife, 50, arrived separately at the Putrajaya court complex at 9am and 9.40am respectively.

The man, a general manager of a subsidiary of Prasarana Malaysia Bhd, was detained for alleged bribery involving RM500,000.

The suspect was arrested at 6.30pm on Wednesday at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya.

Also held to assist in the probe was his wife.

The suspect was said to have accepted bribes to approve several projects involving the supply of buses, spare parts and maintenance work.

7. MACC arrests former aide to Malacca mayor

PETALING JAYA: A former special officer to the mayor of Malacca Historical City Council was arrested on Monday.

The 56-year-old Datuk was detained at about 7.30pm at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission office in Malacca where he was summoned to give a statement.

He is expected to be held overnight and produced in a magistrate's court to be charged on Tuesday.

It is learnt that the officer faces 15 charges under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act, with another four under the Penal Code.

The officer was first arrested on Nov 28 and was released on bail of RM100,000 in two sureties. He was rearrested on Dec 2 to assist in investigations into illegal money-laundering activities and was released on bail of RM100,000, after being detained for 24 hours.

MACC also seized more than RM150mil in cash, vehicles, other assets and documents from him.

The officer was recently appointed the election machinery coordinator for the Tangga Batu parliamentary seat.

The appointment did not go down well with the state MACC as the state government was one of the signatories of the corruption free pledge.

"It did not augur well for the state. Those under investigations should not be given any official duties.

"The public is watching. We must not send out wrong signals as though the authorities are not serious in tackling issues of corruption and power abuse," said a source.

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

8. Penang MACC makes 12th arrest over zakat case

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has detained another contractor to help in investigation on the misappropriation and criminal breach of trust case involving the Pusat Zakat Negeri Pulau Pinang (ZPP) here.

State MACC director Datuk Abdul Aziz Aban said the 42-year-old female contractor was detained after turning up to give her statement at the Penang MACC headquarters in Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah here at 8pm Tuesday night.

"The suspect has been remanded for six days from today until Monday to help in investigation over the case. We believe more people especially contractors carrying out projects for ZPP will be detained soon to help in investigation over the case," he said when contacted by Bernama here Wednesday.

On Tuesday, MACC detained 11 individuals including a 50-year-old ZPP senior officer and three other officers of the agency to help in investigations over misappropriation of tithe money allocated for community development since three years ago.

Seven contractors, aged between 41 and 52 years, were also detained and remanded a week until May 15.

Meanwhile, the Penang Islamic Religious Council (MAIPP) would conduct an internal investigation on the detention of four ZPP officers including a senior officer by MACC.

State Religious Affairs, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Malik Abul Kasim said the internal investigation was to determine whether misappropriation or corruption took place in ZPP.

"The ZPP board members will also meet tomorrow for a relook at the administrative issues in the agency following the detention by MACC and also meet the staff to ensure the smooth running of ZPP," he said.

9. Seven charged with offering bribe to enforcers

IPOH: Things got unruly as two men were about to be charged at the Sessions Court here with bribing a Road Transport Department (JPJ) enforcement officer.

A man, believed to be a relative of one of the accused, pushed media photographers just as both accused were being brought into the courtroom.

V. Kumar, 57, and S. Moorthy, 51, claimed trial before Sessions judge S. Indera Nehru yesterday.

Both of them had allegedly bribed Azlee Ahmad, an RTD assistant enforcement officer, by giving him RM600 on Nov 12, 2014, at about 10.30am along the Ipoh-Lumut road.

The bribe was an inducement not to take action against them as the lorry they were in was overloaded.

Kumar and Moorthy were charged under Section 17(b) of the MACC Act.

MACC deputy public prosecutor Nurul Wahida Jalaluddin asked for bail to be set at RM15,000 each, saying the offence was serious.

Kumar's counsel M. Kathan pleaded for a lower bail as his client was an odd-job worker, earning between RM30 and RM40 a day.

Moorthy, who was not represented, also asked for a lower amount, claiming that he was jobless and on monthly aid from Socso.

Judge Indera Nehru set bail at RM13,000 each with one surety and fixed May 18 for mention.

In Kuching, five businessmen were charged at the Special Court of Corruption with offering bribes totalling RM20,500 to enforcement officers last year.

One of them pleaded guilty while the other four claimed trial before judge Nixon Kennedy Kumbong.

Bakery operator Phang Tze Sin, 41, was sentenced to a day's jail and fined RM10,000, in default two months jail.

Phang admitted to offering a RM1,500 bribe to a Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism officer Mohd Aizat Mohd Nooraini at his factory at Stakan Jaya, at 12.30pm on Dec 21.

The bribe was an inducement for enforcement officers not to take action against him for having in his possession controlled items without a valid permit.

In the other cases, Ling Mee Liong, 61, and Eng Chong Kok, 40, were jointly charged with offering a RM15,000 bribe to a Customs officer at a coffee shop in Batu 10, Kota Padawan, on Oct 17.

Ling and Eng allegedly offered the money as an inducement not to take action against them for an offence under Section 135(1)(d) of the Customs Act 1967.

The last two accused Ting Heng Chuang, 50, and Ngu Ho Woon, 58, also pleaded not guilty to charges under Section 17(b) of the MACC Act.

Ting and Ngu were charged separately with offering a bribe totalling RM4,000 to enforcement officers as an inducement not to take action against their Indonesian workers for not having valid working permits.

Ting allegedly committed the offence at Jalan Stephen Yong, Batu Kawah, on Sept 6, while Ngu at a grocery shop at Batu 7, Penrissen Road, on Dec 15.

Judge Kennedy fixed bail of between RM7,000 and RM15,000 in two sureties and for hearing to start from July 7 to July 19.

10. You can run, jump but flout the law and you'll fall

SEPANDAI-pandai tupai melompat, akhirnya jatuh ke tanah juga (as clever as the squirrel is to jump, ultimately, it falls to the ground). This classic Malay proverb encapsulates the stern message both the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and Inland Revenue Board (IRB) are sending out with their tough new initiatives.

The moral of the story - offenders get caught eventually.

In their bid to clamp down on bribers and tax defaulters, both bodies have sounded the clarion call, revealing, in no uncertain terms, how action will be meted out swiftly, and without fear or favour. Affluence and social and political standing are details which will matter little when the net is cast far and wide.

The ball has already begun to roll, what with the spate of arrests splashed in the media in the last few months. Sabah's Watergate scandal last October captured public interest, the wads of cash, jewellery and assets seized, bugging eyeballs.

But the jury is still out - people are still curious as to how consistent and concerted this kind of action will continue to be. However, with the way things have panned out now, the situation is finally looking good.

Perhaps it was the capture of smaller culprits, right up to the bigwigs in GLCs, which has boosted public faith in the legal system. To date, several of these alleged offenders have been charged, with many others still under probe.

However, in the public eye, 2009 will remain a blemish in the MACC's past, what with the tragic death of political aide Teoh Beng Hock, whose demise was soon followed by Customs officer Ahmad Sarbani Mohamed's end in 2011. Both men died while in MACC's custody.

Things went even more pear-shaped last July when then-chief commissioner Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed suddenly retired. Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad, who took over the reins last August, was left with the arduous task of rebuilding the MACC from scratch, the fruits of his labour currently showing, though.

But any kind of battle hinges on numbers, and the public has been urged to join in the various anti-graft initiatives that have been mooted, such as the Corruption Free Pledge involving state governments, ministries, government agencies, NGOs and sports bodies.

Last week, the Anti-Corruption Revolution Movement (*Gerah*) and 3J (*Jangan Hulur, Jangan Kawtim, Jangan Settle*) campaigns were both launched.

Star Media Group is making its stand by being a media partner of the 3J campaign, which aims to educate the importance of integrity, honesty and staying clear of corruption.

These noble practices haven't gone unnoticed, and likewise, IRB is taking its fight out to the battlefield of tax-evading business moguls and the upper levels of Malaysia's social and political strata, with *Ops KUTip*, which hopes to recover RM326mil in unpaid taxes over the last two years.

With four major operations in place, at least 90% of that outstanding amount is expected to be collected by December. IRB chief executive officer Datuk Sabin Samitah promises swift action against defaulters, saying the board will improve its collection process from this year.

Rome wasn't built in a day, and both the MACC and IRB are explicitly aware of the task at hand, but work is always made lighter with many hands.

So, to stop the rot of corruption and malaise of tax evasion, we could do well by taking cognisance of these initiatives, inculcating the right values in our children to rebuke corruption, and reminding our families of their tax-paying obligations. For the future to prosper in every shape and form, the work surely has to begin now.

11. A-G: MACC's probe into SRC to wrap up within a month

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) investigations into the money flow of SRC International Sdn Bhd should be completed in a month, said Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali.

"I would say it would be (concluded) within a month, or earlier.

"I don't know the result of the investigation, I have yet to see it. But my directive is to wrap up the investigation, and I will give further directions," he told reporters when asked about the case after launching the 17th Asean Senior Law Officials Meeting (Aslom).

Apandi said he had never given orders to stop investigations into SRC International, a subsidiary of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

He clarified that the term "NFA" (no further action) regarding investigations into SRC International does not mean that a case has been permanently closed.

"NFA is a normal terminology by the prosecution to show that there is no further action at the material time.

"The files are never closed. If there is new evidence or developments later on, we can reopen investigations. Not necessarily on 1MDB, on any case," he said, declining reveal further details.

SRC International has been accused of transferring millions of ringgit into the private accounts of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

12. Corruption and its debilitating impact

I APPLAUD the move by Star Media Group to partner with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in launching the "3J" Campaign. It stands for "*Jangan Hulur, Jangan Kawtim, Jangan Settle*" (Don't Give and Don't Settle).

It is part of the bigger initiative to bring the fight against corruption, via Gerakan Revolusi Anti-Rasuah (Gerah), to the people.

Corruption eradication programmes need crusaders. A media organisation has the set-up and platform to do that.

People matter in fighting corruption. People Power is critical.

Nothing excites people more than news of high-profile individuals being investigated or charged for alleged corrupt practices. But screaming headlines won't last.

Hauling them to court is one thing but for every suspect charged, there are many more who get away with murder, so to speak.

The law is not perfect. The system has loopholes.

It is not easy to prove one is corrupt. Many get away scot-free and live happily ever after with their ill-gotten gains.

That is why understanding the scourge is important for people. Creating awareness is key.

Corruption is not to be tolerated. The late Prof Syed Hussein Alatas, who wrote many books and essays on corruption, likened corruption to a disease that can sweep through a society like a tidal wave, leaving in its wake "a trail of negligence, lethargy, inefficiency and callous regard of man's inhumanity to man".

According to him, corruption is "victimising innocent people".

He had been writing about corruption since the 1950s. Three of his important works on the subject are *The Sociology of Corruption*, *The Problem of Corruption* and *Corruption: Its Nature, Causes and Functions*.

Let's face it, according to the World Bank, the cost of corruption equals more than 5% of global gross domestic product. It is estimated that over US\$1 trillion (RM4.3 trillion) is paid in bribes each year.

Let's ask ourselves what that much money can do for development or poverty eradication.

More alarming is the fact that one in seven people on Planet Earth today live in seriously corrupt countries.

Literature on corruption suggests that it is one of the main obstacles to sustainable political and economic development.

Corruption results in leakages of funds and resources.

According to the International Monetary Fund, on an average corruption increases the cost of doing business by 10%. In some countries in Africa, 25% of the GDP is lost to corruption.

In many cases, even aid for the poor is siphoned by corrupt government officials. Many among the poor could have untangled themselves from the yoke of poverty if they had access to aid.

We are all alarmed by these figures. We all agree that corruption reduces efficiency and increases inequality.

Studies have been made to prove the negative correlation between corruption and the quality of government, and how corruption jeopardises integrity and good governance as a whole.

Prof Syed Hussein was right when he wrote that we need to understand the entire mind-set that allows the affliction to rage on.

In fact, he asked a very pertinent question: "How to stem the tide?" Even today, we don't have the answers!

Closer to home, with recent arrests, the perception among our people is that MACC means business these days. MACC is showing its fangs of late. Perception matters.

But people also believe that all campaigns and tough talk achieve very little in the long run.

Charging a suspect is one thing; proving beyond reasonable doubt that one is corrupt in the court of law is never easy. That is why taking the fight to the people is important.

Malaysia's ranking on the Corruption Perception Index dropped by one place (to 55 out of 176 countries) in 2016.

While there is a reason for concern, Transparency International Malaysia president Datuk Akhbar Satar qualified at a press conference that the report ended August last year did not take into account significant arrests from September onwards. But remember, Malaysia was at 49 and 50 in 2012 and 2013 respectively.

Corruption is blind to everything. It tempts everyone.

Being corrupt is a mental state. It is amazing how someone whose income can't afford anything more expensive than a Honda Civic possesses a fleet of luxury cars, not to mention a million in cash and top-of-the-range watches.

Apparently "showing off" is part of the Malaysian Dream. Some people simply are irresistible exhibitionists.

In 1956, the legendary Hindi actor Raj Kapoor played the part of a peasant who came to a city in search of a better life.

As the naïve person that he was, while trying to quench his thirst he was suspected as a thief.

In a corrupt city, an innocent man became the victim.

The movie *Jagte Raho* (literally, *Stay Awake*) depicts how rampant corruption and debilitating poverty dehumanised people. Luckily for Kapoor, he escaped unscathed. But the system remains.

It was a wake-up call back then, and it should jolt us even now. Six decades after the movie, corruption is still bedevilling humanity.

in fact, with new sophistication, corruptors have upped the ante.

- **Johan Jaaffar was a journalist, editor and for some years chairman of a media company, and is passionate about all things literature and the arts. The views expressed here are entirely his own.**

13. Seven in Pusat Zakat probe released on bond

GEORGE TOWN: Seven of the 12 people detained by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for alleged corruption and misappropriation of Pusat Zakat Negeri Pulau Pinang (ZPP) funds have been released.

An MACC source said four contractors were released on a RM5,000 bond each on Saturday while another contractor was released with the same amount of bond yesterday.

He said two ZPP officers were also released on a RM10,000 bond each yesterday..

The source added that the decision whether to release or extend the remand of the remaining five suspects would be made when their remand ends today.

It was reported that the MACC had arrested a ZPP high-ranking Datuk from his office in Bandar Perda, Bukit Mertajam, for allegedly misappropriating tithe money, including approving an annual scholarship for one of his children.

The 50-year-old man is also alleged to have accepted payments from contractors as inducement to provide them with jobs involving ZPP community programmes.

Besides the Datuk, three ZPP officers and eight contractors, aged between 41 and 52, were nabbed in a swoop by the MACC last Tuesday following an investigation that began last December.

14. Another three senior Melaka cops to be remanded

PETALING JAYA: Three more senior Melaka police officers, including two police district chiefs, are set to be remanded for suspected graft.

Among those nabbed are the Melaka Tengah district police chief, who is an ACP, and the Jasin district police chief, who holds the rank of DSP.

Both senior cops were picked up early Wednesday at their homes.

Another police officer, said to be an inspector, was also detained in the pre-dawn swoop.

All three will be taken to the court in Putrajaya at 2.30pm Wednesday to be remanded.

They are suspected of accepting bribes and providing protection to illegal gambling dens and massage parlours in the state.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki confirmed the three arrests.

On Tuesday, three senior cops and three other individuals were detained in a sting operation by the anti-graft body.

They comprised two officers with the rank of ASP and one inspector.

The three others include two middle men and an operator of an illegal gambling den.

Anti-graft officers seized RM51,000 from the six suspects.

All six were remanded Wednesday morning.

15. MACC to prosecute at least one case a week



KUALA KRAI: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has a list of cases of abuse of power and corruption that will be investigated or charged in court on a weekly basis.

Its chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad (pix) said it was only a matter of time that action would be taken against those involved.

"We already have a list of the individuals involved, just wait and see our next course of action," he told Bernama and Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) here.

He declined to reveal the identity of the individuals concerned.

Dzulkifli said he promised Malaysians that at least one case would be investigated or prosecuted weekly to free the country from corruption and abuse of power within the next three years.

"Thus far, I have not been discouraged or failed to carry out my promise. If you look at current development, not only one case a week, but up to two, three cases are investigated and prosecuted in court.

"We will take action from time to time so I ask for support from all Malaysians as we only have a strength of 1,900 personnel and officers to keep an eye on 1.6 million civil servants," he said.

He welcomed the statement from Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi that law enforcement officers under his ministry who asked for bribe would be arrested.

Dzulkifli hopes other ministries would take proactive measures to nab the corrupt.

16. MACC nabs former PJH assistant clerk for 'side income' of RM86,000



PETALING JAYA: He was an assistant clerk in Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd (PJH), but made good money from his "side income".

He suddenly left his job that paid a relatively good salary last week when he got wind of his imminent arrest by the authorities due to his "side income".

He left the organisation hoping anti-graft officers will not be able to locate him.

He was wrong. The 40-year-old suspect was picked up at his house in Taman Kinrara, Puchong, at about 9.30am Monday.

"We believe the suspect had solicited and accepted some RM86,000 from several legal firms.

"The inducement was to ensure these firms will be appointed by banks to prepare loan agreements for purchase of property under PJH.

"The amount he asked for was 55% of the principal legal fees levied on property buyers," said sources.

It is learnt that the suspect had been soliciting the amount from the firms and would meet up with buyers who were successful in securing bank loans.

A source said the suspect had allegedly received the amount in several such under-table deals last year.

But it is believed he had been at it for several years before he decided to quit the job last week.

The suspect was with the PJH's sales and marketing department.

Anti-graft officers are expected to seize documents and raid the suspect's house for more evidence.

His assets and bank accounts will also be scrutinised.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission director of investigations Datuk Simi Abd Ghani confirmed the arrest.

Simi said the suspect would be investigated under Section 17(a) of the MACC Act.

He will be remanded in Putrajaya on Tuesday.

17. Three businessmen plead guilty to bribery charges in Kuching court

KUCHING: Three businessmen were charged at the Special Corruption Court here Tuesday with offering bribes totalling RM9,400 to enforcement officers last year.

All three pleaded guilty to charges under Section 17(b) of the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission Act before judge Nixon Kennedy Kumbong.

Coffeeshop owner Ng Hong Lee, 38, was fined RM27,000 and 10 days in jail, in default three months' imprisonment, for offering a RM5,400 bribe to Immigration officer Diana Alin at a premises at Jalan Tai Shin Jar on Nov 11.

The bribe was an inducement for enforcement officers to not take action against 18 foreign workers who were found without work permits.

Another coffeeshop owner, Lee Wei Luk, was slapped with a RM10,000 fine and seven days imprisonment, in default two months' jail, for offering a bribe of RM2,000 to Immigration senior officer Shareena Mohamad Shuib as an inducement to not take action against seven Indonesian workers.

The 26-year-old allegedly committed the offence at his premises at Siburan, Jalan Kuching-Serian, at 5.50pm on Nov 15.

Car wash operator Pang Kong Joo, 37, was fined RM10,000 and eight days in prison, in default two months' imprisonment, for offering a bribe of RM2,000 to senior Immigration officer Morshidi Marzuki as an inducement against taking action on two Indonesian employees.

The accused allegedly committed the offence at 6pm on Nov 22 at Mile 23 of Jalan Kuching-Serian, Siburan.

All three had asked for leniency, citing that it was their first offence.

Ng said he has to take care of his mother and family, as well as having to send his two children to school.

Lee said he has to take care of his pregnant wife as well as his in-laws and two young children aged three years and six months.

Pang, who has four children aged between three and 13, said he is the sole breadwinner of his family and has to take care of his parents.

18. Contractor gets four weeks' jail and fine for offering cop RM600 bribe

SEREMBAN: A wiring contractor was jailed four weeks and fined RM15,000 in default a further seven months in prison for offering a RM600 bribe to a policeman.

Mohd Jamal Mohamed Tahar, 31, pleaded guilty to the offence before Sessions Court judge Fathiyah Idris on Wednesday.

He committed the offence at 11am at a petrol station near Chuah, Port Dickson, on April 12 last year.

He was accused of offering the bribe to Corporal R. Anbalagan, who had detained him for dangerous driving.

Mohd Jamal is reported to have offered the bribe in a police patrol car while being taken to the district station for a urine test.

He was charged under Section 17(b) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 read together with Section 24 of the same Act.

Offenders can be jailed up to 20 years and fined five times the amount of the bribe or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

19. Remand extended for corporal, middleman in Melaka graft probe



PUTRAJAYA: Remand has been extended for a police corporal and a middleman allegedly involved in providing protection services to gambling dens and massage parlours in Melaka.

Magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman allowed the remand order to be extended for another six days until May 30.

The 52-year-old corporal was arrested on May 17 by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

The 32-year-old middleman was arrested a day after.

Their initial remand orders were supposed to expire Wednesday.

Six other police personnel, including two district police chiefs, were also remanded by over the case.

Three other individuals are also in MACC custody are two middleman and an illegal gambling den operator.

They are all being investigated over claims of senior cops providing protection services to vice dens in Melaka.

20. BNM urges banks to lend more to new productive investments



BNM Governor Datuk Muhammad Ibrahim: "You may be surprised to learn that there are as many as 20 shopping malls just along the 40km stretch of the LDP (Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong) highway.

KUALA LUMPUR: Bank Negara Malaysia has urged banks to provide more financing to new productive investments that are essential to support the transformation of the economy while seeking ways to moderate the lending bias towards property.

Its Governor Datuk Muhammad Ibrahim said on Thursday the banking industry has to be more innovative in product offerings to meet the demands of the new economy.

"At a more fundamental level, we should explore ways to moderate the lending bias towards real estate," he said in his keynote speech or "State of the industry" at ASLI's 21st Malaysian banking summit.

He noted there was significant scope for the banking industry to organise itself more effectively to weigh, expand, and ultimately galvanise action in response to emerging issues that concern the economy and society.

He cited education in long-term financial planning among Malaysians, the impact of financial technology, expanded inclusion to financial services, income and productivity gaps, and labour market developments, as some of the issues where banks ought to be much more active participants in the policy dialogue and debate.

Affordable housing

Muhammad said a current issue that has disproportionately drawn attention to banks is the affordable housing issue.

He pointed out BNM recently featured a box article on this subject in 2016 Annual Report.

"The public debate largely continues to misdiagnose or ignore the root cause of the problem, that is, affordability and accessibility, rooted by low incomes and compounded by the huge mismatch between demand and supply of affordable houses.

"The popular myth, is that it is all about access to financing. I am perplexed. Actual data is self-evident. It shows the continued strength in bank financing to households for the purchase of affordable homes, with four in five new housing loans extended for houses priced below RM500,000.

"Yet banks have done little to educate and inform the public on this financing trend. The industry ought to be at the forefront in explaining the real situation and where possible, offering suggestions to help address this issue," he pointed out.

Muhammad said affordable housing is not a problem that is unique to Malaysia.

He said policymakers around the world, including in developed countries, continue to look for creative solutions to this delicate socio-economic challenge. A common thread across these solutions is their multi-faceted dimensions.

"The solution for Malaysia has to involve rebalancing the supply of housing towards the affordable segments. We require a bold and pragmatic solution.

"We estimate a shortage of 960,000 units of affordable housing. This is projected to reach one million units by 2020.

"A central authority and a national repository can significantly improve the ability to better distribute, monitor and manage the supply-demand imbalances. Developing a thriving rental market should also be on the agenda to temper the nation's fixation on home ownership," he said.

Abundant shopping malls

Muhammad also highlighted banks should be concerned with is the sizable surplus in commercial property.

"In contrast to affordable housing, the office and retail markets are in oversupply," he noted.

In 2016, the vacancy rate for prime office space in the Klang Valley stood at 21.8%, outstripping the regional average of 6.2%.

Monthly rentals of prime office space in Kuala Lumpur are the lowest among regional cities.

"Over the next few years, the significant incoming supply of large projects is likely to aggravate supply conditions in this segment," he cautioned.

Signs of oversupply are also emerging in the retail segment in major urban centres in Malaysia.

This can be traced to the abundance of shopping malls, he said.

"You may be surprised to learn that there are as many as 20 shopping malls just along the 40km stretch of the LDP (Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong) highway. It is equally astonishing that the prime retail space per capita in cities like Johor, Penang and Kuala Lumpur is actually higher than regional megacities such as Shanghai and Beijing, and also higher income cities such as Singapore and Hong Kong," he said.

Rising vacancy rates, price corrections

Muhammad said a significant increase in vacancy rates, and the ensuing price corrections, are risks that BNM has highlighted as far back as 2013.

He pointed out the concerns are not limited to effects within the commercial property sector, but have broader spillovers to other economic sectors.

During the Global Financial Crisis, commercial property was a major driver of loan losses in Australia, France, Ireland and New Zealand, despite generally accounting for a much smaller share of banks' loan books, compared to residential property. This was attributable to a sharper pace of contraction in commercial property prices, compared to house prices.

"Banks are key stakeholders in this conversation. Data available within banks can be a harbinger of turns in the property cycle, and used more effectively in combination with other sources of market data, to smooth out adjustments between demand and supply.

"Furthermore, in the same way that reporting standards are starting to move away from provisioning practices that were "too little too late", there is merit in in taking a closer look at

current valuation practices that contribute to property boom-bust cycles.

"It may well be time to consider how we might correct practices that are encouraging banks to lend "too much too early" in specific property segments, before demand drivers are firmly entrenched," he added.

21. Electrician claims trial to charge of bribing cop



Muhammad Yusrol Shafiq (in red shirt) at the court on Thursday.

KUANTAN: An electrician has claimed trial to a bribery charge at the Sessions Court here.

Muhammad Yusrol Shafiq Muhammad Yuzni, 21, was accused of offering a RM500 bribe to a detective corporal to set him free after he was caught with five straws containing drugs in the form of 22 red pills.

According to the charge sheet, the bribe was offered at a room in the Kuantan police headquarters at 7.15pm on May 21.

The Gambang-born Muhammad Yusrol was calm when the charge was read to him in front of Sessions Court judge Habibah Mohamed Yusof on Thursday.

He was charged under Section 17(b) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act for giving or accepting gratification.

If found guilty, he faces imprisonment for a term not exceeding 20 years, and a fine of not less than five times the sum or value of the gratification or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

MACC prosecuting officer Kamariah Seman offered bail at RM10,000 and a surety.

Muhammad Yusrol, who was unrepresented, pleaded for a lower bail as his salary is less than RM1,000 and he has to take care of his mother and two younger siblings who are still schooling.

Judge Habibah set bail at RM4,000 with one surety, and mention on June 14.

22. Muhyiddin denies receiving 1MDB-linked funds

KUALA LUMPUR: Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has refuted claims by Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz that he received funds related to 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

The former deputy prime minister, who is now Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia president, denied receiving a single sen from the RM2.6bil donation.

"I read a statement saying that among those who received the most from the RM2.6bil were me and Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal.

"These are all allegations! None of the money went into my pocket," he said at a Pribumi ceramah at Kelab Sultan Sulaiman in Kampung Baru here on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Shafie said he had never received any funds linked 1MDB.

The Parti Warisan Sabah chief said neither he nor Muhyiddin had benefited from donations received by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, as alleged by Nazri.

Nazri, an Umno supreme council member, claimed on Sunday that he was among recipients of funds from the RM2.6bil donation, but said that Muhyiddin and Shafie had received an even bigger portion of the money.

Shafie said that Nazri's claims were absurd and false.

"As far as I know, Najib never gave me any money from 1MDB," said Shafie, who is also Semporna MP.

The former Umno vice-president said the only time he had spoken to the Prime Minister about such funding was in relation to helping people to go for umrah.

23. 10 including two OCPDs released on MACC bail

PUTRAJAYA: Ten individuals including two district police chiefs, who were remanded to assist in investigations into allegations of police providing protection to vice dens around Melaka, were released on Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) bail.

The police personnel included two district police chiefs serving in Melaka who were each released on bail of RM50,000 with one surety at remand proceedings in the magistrate's court, here Friday.

Today, at the same court, Magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman allowed three suspects who were members of the public to be released on bail of RM10,000 each with one surety.

All the individuals, aged between 31 and 54, were being investigated under Section 16 (a)(B) and 17(a) of the MACC Act 2009 and Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001.

To date, 13 individuals including nine police officers and personnel in Melaka have been detained to assist investigation into the case.

However, three other suspects, namely two police officers with the rank of Deputy Superintendent (DSP) and Assistant Superintendent (ASP) and a van driver who acted as the middleman in collecting the protection money are still being remanded.

The police officer with the rank of DSP from Melaka Tengah was remanded for seven days until May 29, the van driver until May 30 and the police officer with the rank of ASP was detained for seven days up to May 31 to assist in the investigation.

24. Stop work order issued for Kedah project

ALOR SETAR: Aman Laut, a RM1.2bil mixed development project here dubbed the "Dubai of Malaysia", has been issued with an immediate stop work order.

The order was issued by the Department of Environment (DOE) through a notice dated May 15.

This was confirmed by DOE director-general Datuk Dr Ahmad Kamarulnajib Che Ibrahim.

"The move is in accordance with Section 34AA (2) of the Malaysian Quality Environmental Act 1974 (Amendment) 2012 that no work can be carried out prior to the approval of the department.

"Once it has been approved, only then should construction work be carried out," he said when contacted on Sunday.

The project, which comprises high-end bungalows, chic condominiums, malls and high-end eateries, was meant to transform the state, including the Kuala Kedah fishing town.

However, it was protested against by fishermen, who said the project had jeopardised their income.

25. Air force clerk in court over RM11,459 in false medical claims

KUALA LUMPUR: A wheelchair-bound air force clerk was charged in the Sessions Court here with seven counts of making RM11,459 in false medical claims.

Siti Nor Hakiki Abdullah, 38, was accused of cheating air logistics office administrative officer Siti Kartika Sari Mohamad Salleh by submitting seven medical expenses forms to make the claims with false information on non-existent medicine.

She allegedly committed the offence at the air logistics office at the Defence Ministry here between Aug 12 and Dec 10, 2013.

Siti Nor Hakiki claimed trial before judge Allaudeen Ismail after the charges were read to her Tuesday.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission DPP Siti Syakimah Ibrahim offered bail at RM10,000 with one surety and applied for the passport of the accused to be surrendered to the court.

In asking for a lower bail, Siti Nor Hakiki said she suffers from slipped disc and is the sole breadwinner of the family, supporting her mother and two children because her husband is jobless.

Allaudeen fixed bail at RM6,000 with one surety and ordered the accused to surrender her passport.

The court set July 26 for mention.

26. More doctors charged with falsifying documents

GEORGE TOWN: Two doctors were among four people charged in the Sessions Court here with attempting to deceive the Road Transport Department (JPJ) into approving vocational licence applications.

Dr See Teik Guan, 49, and Dr Kamal Fasha Hussain, 54, claimed trial separately to the charges of attempting to deceive the JPJ into believing that they had conducted medical examinations on Firdaues Azizan, 34, and Hasrol Hissam Osman, 41.

The offences were allegedly committed at their respective clinics in Batu Feringghi and Gelugor.

The offence under Section 415 of the Penal Code, read together with Section 28(1)(a) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009, is punishable with a jail term of up to five years or a fine, or both.

In two separate cases, insurance agents Chan Ah Kow, 57, and Lim Geok Huat, 54, denied using fraudulent documents for JPJ vocational licence applications.

They were charged under Section 471 of the Penal Code, which carries a maximum of two years' jail or fine, or both.

All four offences were allegedly committed on Feb 14 this year between 11.20am and 2.25pm.

DPP Ahmad Ghazali Muhamad Nadzri prosecuted.

Sessions judge Norsalha Hamzah allowed bail at RM6,000 each and fixed July 14 for the mention of all four cases.

In BUTTERWORTH two doctors were similarly charged with falsifying reports without performing the required medical examinations of their patients.

Dr Ding Yong Chaung, 73, and Dr Mohamad Lufti Rashidi, 32, were both charged with attempting to deceive the JPJ into believing that they had conducted physical health examinations on their patients for the application of vocational driving licences.

The accused are alleged to have committed the offences at different times on Feb 14 at their respective clinics here.

Dr Mohamad Lufti was represented by M. Puveneswaran while Dr Ding was unrepresented.

27. Doctor charged with falsifying documents



Samuel Kumar arriving at Ipoh Sessions court to be charged with falsifying documents. SAIFUL BAHRI/The Star.

IPOH: A doctor from Parit Buntar has been slapped with two charges of falsifying documents with the intention of inducing the Road Transport Department (JPJ) to renew the driving licences of two lorry drivers.

Dr S. P. Samuel Kumar (*pic*), 58, claimed trial to the charges under Section 415 of the Penal Code, read together with Section 28(1)(a) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act, before Sessions Court judge S. Indra Nehru here on Tuesday.

Dr Samuel is alleged to have tried to cheat the JPJ into believing that he conducted physical examinations on two lorry drivers for the renewal of vocational driving licences on Feb 14 at his clinic in Pekan Lama Parit Buntar, Kerian between 10.15am and 3.40pm.

The offence is punishable under Section 417 of the Penal Code, with a maximum five years in jail or a fine or both.

In asking for a lower bail for his client, lawyer Sudesh Singh said the doctor still had to look after his retired wife and two children, who are still studying.

He also said that Dr Samuel would not abscond as he still has his private practice in Parit Buntar.

Indra Nehru set bail at RM12,000 for both charges and June 14 for mention.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Nurul Wahida Jalaluddin prosecuted.

28. Six-day remand for suspect who allegedly solicited RM70,000 bribe

PUTRAJAYA: A 54-year-old man has been remanded for six days while the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigates claims that he solicited and received a RM70,000 bribe from a VIP.

The suspect, who works in a media agency, will be held until June 5 after magistrate Nik Isfahanie Tasnin Wan Ab Rahman allowed the anti-graft body's application to hold him in custody.

He is said to have solicited and received money from the VIP, purportedly to help cover up a corruption case.

The suspect was arrested at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur with RM20,000 in cash at around 9.30pm on Tuesday.

He is being investigated under Section 16(a)(B) of the MACC Act 2009.

29. Two KPDNKK officers nabbed for soliciting bribe

IPOH: Two Perak state Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism Ministry (KPDNKK) officers have been arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for soliciting and accepting a bribe from a businessman.

Both officers, aged 34 and 35, are alleged to have committed the offence at the Ipoh City Council square at 10.45pm on Tuesday. They are accused of having accepted RM8,000 from the 44-year-old businessman.

The businessman is understood to have wanted to close a case involving the sale of counterfeit liquor at two premises in 2014.

Both the officers have been remanded for five days from Wednesday.

30. Man arrested for soliciting bribe from VIP

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has arrested a man who allegedly solicited and received a RM70,000 bribe from a VIP, purportedly to help cover up a corruption case being investigated.

It is understood that the 54-year-old, who works in a media agency, had told the VIP that he knew someone in the anti-graft agency and that he was able to help solve the case.

According to sources, the suspect was arrested at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur with RM20,000 cash at around 9.30pm on Tuesday night.

The suspect is expected to be brought to the Putrajaya court to be remanded on Wednesday to assist in the MACC's investigation under Section 16(a)(B) of the MACC Act 2009.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki who confirmed the arrest said the agency would not compromise with anything that could smear its reputation.

"This is not the first time that this happened. MACC had previously taken action against several individuals for using MACC's name to solicit bribes.

"We would like to advise those who are being probed for corruption to be careful with these individuals," he said.