

The Star September 2017

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1. 'No approval for 12 land-clearing cases in Penang hills'



GEORGE TOWN: Twelve cases of land clearing highlighted by the Penang Hill Watch in its report earlier this year were confirmed to have been carried out without approval.

Penang Hill Watch is a watchdog initiative launched by local NGO coalition Penang Forum. It said that on July 25, it received written responses from the Penang Island City Council (MBPP), providing details of the 12 cases highlighted in a report in April.

"In summary, all 12 cases of hill clearing were not officially approved," it said in a statement on Wednesday.

It said that six were hill clearing on private land without MBPP's approval, for which the council later issued stop-work orders and took legal action.

Five other cases involved state-owned hill land, which saw the council notifying several agencies, including the Forestry Department, the District Office and state Land and Mines Office.

"It is obvious from MBPP's response that other government agencies with jurisdiction over state-owned land must be actively engaged to minimise illegal hill clearing," said the forum.

One case, said the forum, involved land clearing in a former quarry, adding that MBPP was discussing with the state legal adviser to resolve the matter.

"There is merit in complementing remote monitoring with the field observations that the initiative does," it said.

Reports of hill clearing in Penang can be submitted to pghillswatch@gmail.com.

2. FGV says decision on Zakaria early next week



FGV independent domestic inquiry on group president/ CEO Datuk Zakaria Arshad will deliver its decision by early next week.

(FGV) independent domestic inquiry on group president/ CEO Datuk Zakaria Arshad will deliver its decision by early next week.

FGV's board of directors announced to Bursa Malaysia the domestic inquiry proceedings resumed on Tuesday.

However, as one of the panel members had to leave for an official overseas trip on Tuesday evening, the decision would be delivered next week.

"Until further notice from the board, the group president/CEO and group chief financial officer shall continue to be on leave of absence.

"In the meanwhile, Datuk Khairil Anuar Aziz will continue to serve as FGV's officer-in-charge and Aznur Kama Azmir will continue as FGV's interim group CFO until further announcement by the board," FGV said.

On July 17, FGV's newly appointed acting chairman Tan Sri Sulaiman Mahbob was quoted saying the investigation on Zakaria was expected to be completed by Aug 14.

On July 22, FGV reiterated it was not involved in any conspiracy or personal agenda in conducting the internal inquiry on Zakaria and three senior management staff.

FGV had then stated the investigation was considered a fiduciary responsibility of the board in order to discharge its duty of care to the listed company and its shareholders.

"FGV, which is committed to good corporate governance practices, will ensure that the domestic inquiry is conducted in a fair and just manner. The domestic inquiry will focus on the Safitex debt issues," it was quoted saying.

3. Cop charged with accepting RM5,000 bribe



SIBU: A police inspector was charged at the Corruption Court here Tuesday for demanding a RM5,000 bribe from a woman to return jewellery in a car that was seized during a drug-offence related arrest.

According to the charge sheet, Azrul Izman Shadan, 35, who was then attached to the anti-narcotics department, had asked for RM5,000 from Amy Yip Su Ling as an inducement for the return of some jewellery on March 13, 2015.

The jewellery was in a car that was seized when Yip's husband was detained for a drug-related offence.

Azrul pleaded not guilty to the charge under Section 17(a) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009.

The offence provides for a jail sentence of up to 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the sum of the value of the gratification.

Justice Nixon Kennedy Kumbong released Azrul on bail of RM10,000 in one surety and fixed Oct 3-5 for the trial.

He also told the accused, who was accompanied by his wife, to appoint his own counsel for the trial.

Azrul had requested from the court to have the trial heard at the court in Kuching as he was now attached to the Kuching police station.

4. Zahid: Govt will not tolerate any mismanagement in Felda



KOTA TINGGI: The Government has reiterated that it will not protect any parties involved with any abuse of power in Felda's management.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said those involved will face justice, adding that the sacrifices made by Felda settlers will not be in vain.

"The problems between Felda and Felda Global Ventures (FGV) should not be hidden but instead, must be resolved immediately," said Dr Ahmad Zahid.

He urged the people to have faith in the Government.

"Felda was built by our second premier Tun Abdul Razak Hussein to help those living in poverty. And now, his son Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak always prioritises Felda and its settlers," added Dr Ahmad Zahid.

He also said that the Government appointed Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad as Felda chairman as he has the credibility in transforming it.

He urged all Felda settlers not to be influenced by certain parties who make false accusations against the Government and Felda.

"Believe in the Government's leadership and we will improve Felda," he said in his speech during a programme held in conjunction with the Superbikers Association of Malaysia Merdeka Rides 2017 at Felda Lok Heng Barat here on Thursday.

Dr Ahmad Zahid said he was confident that Felda would continue to support and remained a Barisan Nasional stronghold despite attempts by the Opposition to change it.

"Do not change the clothes you are wearing even if it is old and wrinkled as when it is washed and ironed, it will look better," he said.

"If we change our clothes, then we do not know whether we will be comfortable wearing it as their sizes might be too tight or loose," added Dr Ahmad Zahid.

5. Penang MACC arrests six cops, individual for bribery

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has arrested six policemen and an individual for alleged bribery involving a sum of RM4,500.

The six policemen from the George Town district narcotics division were arrested at 2am on Friday.

According to a statement by MACC, the men, aged between 28 and 49, were involved in a raid at Majestic Heights in Paya Terubong and detained two suspects believed to be in possession of four packets of ketum water.

The policemen were alleged to have received RM4,500 from the suspects through a 28-year-old individual who was also arrested by the MACC.

All the seven men are being held at the Penang MACC headquarters.

George Town OCPD Asst Comm Anuar Omar could not be reached for comment.

6. Former aide of Melaka DAP rep and businessman claim trial to cheating, CBT

MELAKA: A former aide of a state DAP assemblyman and a businessman claimed trial to charges of cheating and criminal breach of trust (CBT) over a botched land deal in Kelantan amounting to almost RM2mil.

The accused Wong Chi Sing, 54, and Mohd Haffiz Mohd Rasdib, 32, pleaded not guilty to the charges before Sessions Court Judge Norma Ismail on Friday.

The duo face 11 charges under Section 420 of the Penal Code for cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property.

Based on the statements of fact, the two had allegedly attempted to dupe one Liw Chong Liong, 57, by handing over cheques in seven bank transactions for the leasing of a 402ha oil-palm plantation worth RM576,500 at Mukim Sokor, Kusial district in Tanah Merah, Kelantan.

The offences were allegedly committed between October 2014 and November 2015 at Taman Paya Emas in Melaka.

The two face three other charges under Section 406 of the Penal Code for CBT for allegedly misusing a sum of RM1,326,300 made by one Bong Fook Hin, 51, as payment for a rubber plantation at Kekal Ulu Galas forest reserve.

The offences were allegedly committed between October 2012 and January 2014.

The duo also face another charge under Section 471 of the Penal Code for falsifying a document for the upgrading project on a 202ha forest reserve at Bertam Ulu here in May 2013.

The court set bail at RM35,000 each with additional conditions that required both accused to report to the nearest police station on a monthly basis as well as to surrender their passports to the court.

Oct 4 was set as the re-mention date.

7. Three more arrested in Petronas Carigali probe

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has remanded another three individuals in connection with the Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (PCSB) graft case.

Two individuals were brought to the Putrajaya Magistrate Court at 10am on Friday to be remanded. A third was brought in later.

All three were remanded for seven days.

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

The other two were a 57-year-old director of a company that carried out work for PCSB, and a 28-year-old former technical assistant of PCSB.

Magistrate Nur Esfahanie Tasnim Wan Ab Rahman allowed the three to be remanded for six days.

According to sources, the trio are believed to have collaborated in submitting three falsified invoices between April and June 2015.

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

However, PCSB had made full payment to the company.

8. IRB: RM6mil tax collection target for each officer not true

PUTRAJAYA: The Inland Revenue Board (LHDN) has refuted the allegation that it has set the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) target of RM6mil in tax collection for each of its audit officer.

It said in a statement that its annual tax collection target was set by the government and announced to the public during the tabling of the country's annual budget by the Finance Ministry.

As such, this year's tax collection initiatives and strategies undertaken by IRB would have been planned in November 2016 and implemented from January 2017, the statement said.

The allegation, which went viral on WhatsApp, stated that LHDN had aggressively intensified tax collection efforts to achieve the target of RM127bil this year, with each of its officer having to achieve the KPI target of RM6mil in tax collection.

LHDN said it viewed seriously the allegation that its officers had acted unprofessionally during the audit for the sake of achieving the allegedly set target. -

9. MACC begins crackdown on illegal logging, seven arrested

PETALING JAYA: Seven people have been rounded up in two states as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) launched a crackdown on illegal logging.

A Jerantut Forestry Department officer and his wife, an owner and a manager of a company were the first to be picked up in Pahang.

Three others, two logging firms owners and a lorry driver, were held in Terengganu.

All the seven suspects, aged between 32 and 62, were arrested in several locations between 10.30am and 3.30pm on Monday.

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

All seven will be remanded on Tuesday.

On Monday, The Star front-paged a report that the MACC was gathering evidence on illegal logging and would be making arrest against the culprits for ravaging the environment for personal gains.

Some enforcement officers tasked with taking action against illegal loggers are believed to have turned a blind eye and worked in cahoots with illegal loggers.

In return, the officers are said to be promised a certain percentage from profits from the illegal activities every month, paying no heed to the destruction of the country's forests.

It is learnt that these unethical officers are raking in tens of thousand of ringgit every month as kickback and side income to finance their lavish lifestyle.

10. MACC remands five over illegal logging in Pahang

KUANTAN: Four men and a woman have been remanded for six days at the magistrate's court here.

Magistrate Tengku Eliana Tuan Kamaruzaman granted the remand from Tuesday to Sunday for the five suspects.

The five - a Jerantut Forestry Department officer and his wife, a forestry department ranger and two owners of a logging company - are suspected to have either given or received bribes so action would not be taken against illegal logging in Jerantut.

The five were remanded to aid investigations under Section 17(a) and 16(a)(B) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act.

The five were arrested on Monday at the Jerantut Forestry Department office and their respective homes.

On Monday, *The Star* reported that the MACC was gathering evidence on illegal logging and would be arresting the culprits for ravaging the environment for personal gain.

11. MACC to wrap up probe on Isa Samad soon

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is set to wrap up its investigations on former Felda chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad (*pic*) over controversial hotel purchases by Felda Investment Corporation (FIC).

MACC chief commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said that investigations are almost complete but refused to divulge further information on the matter.

"There are several matters that need to be tied up before we can wrap up our investigations.

"We expect to do this by the end of this month," he told reporters after launching MACC's anti-corruption posters and painted messages on two train coaches at the Bank Rakyat Bangsar LRT station on Tuesday.

He said the investigation papers will be submitted to the Attorney-General's Chambers and will also contain MACC's recommendations.

Asked if Mohd Isa would be charged along with several others, Dzulkifli said that this had yet to be finalised.



Dzulkifli also refused to comment on the fate of Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) group president and CEO Datuk Zakaria Arshad who was called in to assist MACC in investigations.

Zakaria, who was suspended for three months pending a domestic probe by the company, is expected to resume his post this week.

Mohd Isa, who was also FGV chairman, was arrested and remanded at the commission's headquarters on Aug 15 after he was called in for a statement.

He is among a long list of individuals who have been called up by the MACC over FIC's purchases of hotels in London and Kuching.

Previously, his former aide Muhammad Zahid Md Arip as well as former FIC chief executive officer Zaid Abdul Jalil were held under MACC remand.

The MACC also called up FIC's former and present directors and lawyers to assist in investigations.

FIC is said to have purchased a hotel in Kensington, London for an inflated price of RM330mil, when the actual value is said to have been RM110mil.

Its purchase of a hotel in Kuching for RM160mil is also said to have been RM50mil more than the actual value.

12. 'Datuk' among four nabbed in graft probe

PETALING JAYA: Four men, including a "Datuk", have been nabbed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) over the misappropriation of some RM40mil.

The Datuk, a company chief executive, was arrested together with a secretary and an assistant financial officer from the same corporation.

The fourth suspect, who holds a honorific "Dr" title, is a director with a different company.

The four were picked up in a sting operation in Kuala Lumpur between 4.30pm and 6pm.

The suspects are believed to have collaborated to siphon off an allocation provided by the Federal Government.

It is learnt that the misappropriation started in 2016.

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

13. Pairin: RM101mil allocated to upgrade Sabah railways



KOTA KINABALU: The Federal Government, through the Transport Ministry, has approved an allocation of RM101mil for the execution of three projects to upgrade the railway service in Sabah, said Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan (*pic*).

Pairin, who is also state Infrastructure Development Minister, said the three projects, which involved the upgrading of the railway tracks from Halogilat Beaufort to Tenom, would be provided with three Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs).

He added that a study would be conducted on a communications system for the Sabah railway service.

"The study will identify suitable communication gadgets to be used in the effort to further increase security measures along the 134km railway line from Tanjung Aru to Tenom.

"The projects are expected to start this year. The ministry also plans to expand Sabah's railway service network to fulfil public transportation needs," he said in his speech during the launch of the state's National Railway Awareness programme here on Friday.

In an effort to improve railway services in Sabah, Pairin said the state had recently launched a new train set which comprised three coaches that operated on the 48km route from Beaufort to Tenom.

14. Govt to allocate RM30mil to upgrade religious schools nationwide

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will allocate RM30mil to upgrade the infrastructure of private tahfiz schools nationwide to prevent safety-related incidents in future.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced this after visiting the Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah tahfiz school in Kampung Datuk Keramat on Friday night.

"What happened here is a tragedy that is very sad and heartbreaking.

"On inspection, I believe that the incident could have been avoided if there were no amendments made to the original plan approved by the Fire and Rescue Department.

"The additional wall constructed left the school with only one exit in the event of a fire," he said after a site visit and briefing here.

The Prime Minister and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor arrived on site at 9.55pm, along with other ministers.

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V arrived at 10.20pm and was also given a full briefing by police and firemen at the scene.

Najib said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi will chair a meeting to "take stock" of the condition of tahfiz schools nationwide.



Sultan Muhammad V (right, black T-shirt) and Najib (centre, white shirt) are given a briefing by Bomba personnel at the site of the tragedy. - Bernama

"Some follow the standards set by the Fire and Rescue Department, and some are registered with their religious departments but do not comply with standards.

"This is the right time to take stock of this. For the first time, the Government will allocate RM30mil for all private tahfiz schools to upgrade their infrastructure," he said.

Najib added that this dispelled notions that the Government was not providing help in the construction and operation of tahfiz schools.

"This incident is fate, and our plan was to get this school to move to a different building, but this had to happen before those plans could materialise.

"My deepest condolences to the families of the victims," he said.

On aid for the next-of-kin, Najib said the Government and Umno would be providing some.

The premier will also make a personal contribution as he had a connection to the students and religious teachers here.

"They used to come to my house in Jalan Duta every Friday night for prayers.

"This is a tragedy that I feel on a personal level," he said, adding that aid will be given to families of the deceased, for those injured in the incident, and for those involved who are suffering trauma.

On the cause of fire, Najib said he would wait for the full report before divulging any details.

15. Khazanah invested RM1.72b in US esp tech sector



KUALA LUMPUR: Khazanah Nasional Bhd has made a total of 15 investments worth about US\$410mil (RM1.72bil) in the United States, principally in the technology sector.

The sovereign fund said on Friday that its investments in the US represented 1.3% of its portfolio realisable asset value (RAV) of RM145.3bil as at Dec 31, 2016.

"Khazanah practices a strict process of origination and evaluation of investment proposals, involving detailed due diligence and multiple investment gates, before submission to the Khazanah Board of Directors for consideration and approval," it said.

Below is the statement issued by Khazanah:

We refer to various news reports and statements regarding Khazanah Nasional Berhad's ("Khazanah") investments in the United States, following the recent official visit by the Prime Minister of Malaysia YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak.

In line with its policy to progressively diversify its investment portfolio overseas, Khazanah opened Khazanah Americas Incorporated in San Francisco in September 2013, with a focus on the innovation and technology sector. The San Francisco office is the third of Khazanah's five foreign offices, the others being in Beijing, Mumbai, Istanbul and London.

To date, Khazanah has made a total of 15 investments worth approximately US\$410million in the United States, principally in the technology sector. Our investments in the United States represent 1.3pct of Khazanah's portfolio Realisable Asset Value ("RAV") of RM145.3billion as at 31 December

2016.

Khazanah practices a strict process of origination and evaluation of investment proposals, involving detailed due diligence and multiple investment gates, before submission to the Khazanah Board of Directors for consideration and approval.

Overall, long-term value creation from our investment portfolio remains steady, with our portfolio Net Worth Adjusted (NWA) having increased 3.1 times, or growing at a compounded annual growth rate ("CAGR") of 9.3% per annum, for the period from May 2004 to 31 December 2016.

In line with our mandate as a strategic investment fund that creates long-term value for Malaysia via multiple sectors and geographies, Khazanah will continue to explore investment opportunities in the United States, focusing primarily on the innovation and technology sector.

16. Longer detention for five held over graft

KUANTAN: The five individuals held on suspicion of corruption related to illegal logging will be detained for another three days.

Lawyer Datuk Ng See Teong said senior assistant registrar Rini Triany Muhamad Ali granted a remand extension until Wednesday after hearing submissions by the suspects' counsel and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

Ng said the MACC, represented by deputy public prosecutor Mohamad Fadhly Mohd Zamry, initially requested for a week's extension as there were still documents, evidence and many witnesses elsewhere that had to be located.

The four men and a woman were suspected of being involved in the giving and taking of bribes to facilitate illegal logging in Jerantut, that had caused the state government to lose millions of ringgit since 2015.

The suspects were a Jerantut Forestry Department officer and his wife, a forest ranger and an owner and a manager of a logging company.

The five, aged between 40 and 50, were arrested on Sept 11.

They were also represented by Hon Kai Ping, Ibrahim Kamaruddin and Datuk Syed Azimal Amir Syed Abu Bakar.

17. Forestry Dept officer gets nine months jail, RM150,000 fine for accepting bribes

KUANTAN: A Forestry Department officer was sentenced to nine months in prison and a fine of RM150,000 by a Sessions Court here for five charges related to bribery.

Zainal Abidin Maskon, 33, pleaded guilty to five charges of obtaining a valuable thing without consideration before Sessions Court judge Habibah Mohamed Yusof.

In the charge sheets, he is said to have taken bribes in the form of cheques worth a total of RM340,000 from P&K Trading Company manager Yiang Kwai Seng at a bank in Jalan Bukit Uni here on Jan 24 and June 21 this year and July 1 last year.

The bribes were to speed up the approval of logging licences at the Tekai Forest Reserve and Tekam Forest Reserve in Jerantut, Pahang.

Lawyer Hon Kai Ping, who represented Zainal, pleaded for leniency saying his client would lose his job and that he had to support his three children, all aged under six.

He added that Zainal's wife was unemployed and that the accused had given full cooperation to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) during investigations.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Mohd Fadhly Mohd Zamry said a heavy deterrent sentence must be made as such offences were frequently being committed.

He pointed out that Zainal's offence also resulted in losses to the environment and the community.

Judge Habibah meted out a three-month jail term and a fine of RM50,000 each for the three charges although the other two charges were taken into account during sentencing.

She added that the prison sentences would be served concurrently from the date of Zainal's arrest on Sept 11, and if he failed to pay the fine, it would be replaced with five months in prison for each offence.

18. MACC arrests three suspects over RM20,000 bribe

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has picked up three men for suspected corruption involving RM20,000.

Sources said the three are a political secretary, a personal assistant and a clerk of a parliamentarian.

The first two suspects were detained at a restaurant in Taman Maluri at 1.45pm on Thursday.

In a follow up, the third suspect was nabbed at the MACC headquarters here.

It is learnt all the three suspects are being probed for soliciting a bribe from a company director over an investigation into an Immigration matter.

When contacted, state MACC director Datuk Han Chee Rull confirmed the arrests of the three.

19. CM: Show proof for RM2bil flood projects

BUTTERWORTH: Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has questioned Penang Federal Action Council chairman Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin Osman on his claim that RM2bil was spent on flood mitigation projects in Penang.

"I hope Zainal and the Federal Government could show proof of the money spent on flood mitigation projects in the state.

"When we checked with the Drainage and Irrigation Department, we were told that only RM300mil had been spent," he told a press conference at the Bukit Juru forest reserve yesterday.

Lim was responding to a press statement by Zainal, who claimed that the Federal Government had never stopped its allocation for flood mitigation projects in Penang.

"The Federal Government had spent RM2bil on flood mitigation projects in Penang since the 10th Malaysia Plan.

"It also approved RM150mil for the Sungai Pinang flood mitigation project in November last year," he said

20. MACC objects to setting up the National Integrity and Good Governance Department



SUNGAI PETANI: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has objected to plan to set up the National Integrity and Good Governance Department (JITN), saying the budget can be better used to improve existing enforcement agencies.

MACC chief commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said the budget allocation for the new department can be better utilised by improving existing agencies and the welfare of its staff.

"What needs to be done is to improve and strengthen the laws, human resources and welfare of existing agencies.

"The Government should oversee the welfare of law enforcers.

"Go and see the conditions of police barracks. They are poorly maintained," he said.

Dzulkifli urged the Government to reexamine the salaries and housing schemes of law enforcers.

"If we want to decrease corruption and abuse of power in enforcement agencies, the problem will not be solved if law enforcers do not have their welfare taken care of.

"I will defend them (law enforcers) when needed, and take action against them (if they do wrong).

"But we also need to see the state of their welfare," he told reporters at the corruption-free pledge signing ceremony here Tuesday.

"We already have agencies such as MACC, Integrity Institute of Malaysia and Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission. We also have the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia to oversee matters concerning human rights.

"Forming a new department will be costly and require hiring new staff. Their scope of duties will be similar to other law enforcers," he added.

Bernama reported that Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Paul Low said the Cabinet had given the green light for the setting up JITN to serve as a coordinating body to lead transformational changes in the public and private sectors.

He said the department will be focusing on good governance, integrity and human rights.

21. State: Only RM443mil of federal funds spent

GEORGE TOWN: The Federal Government may have allocated RM1.79bil for flood mitigation projects in Penang under three Malaysia Plans but only RM443mil has been spent between 2006 until now.

Penang Local Government Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said RM1.4bil was allocated under the 9th Malaysia Plan but only RM306mil was spent.

He added that under the 10th Malaysia Plan, RM193mil was set aside and RM125mil spent while under the 11th Malaysia Plan, RM205mil was allocated and only RM12mil spent to date.

Penang Federal Action Committee chairman Datuk Seri Zainal Abidin had said over RM2bil was spent on flood mitigation projects in the state but Chow disputed the statement.

"It's most inappropriate that Zainal failed to disclose the amount spent.

"The figures clearly showed that the amount allocated was not fully spent on the projects which could have alleviated the flood problem.

"The Federal Government has a big role to play in solving the flood issue and the state has the right to ask that the planned projects be implemented," he told reporters in Komtar yesterday.

Zainal had said the flood situation in Penang would have been worse if the Federal Government had not spent RM2.6bil under the three Malaysia Plans on flood mitigation projects in the state.

22. Brothers in Gatco probe remanded



Under investigation: Police officers escorting one of the Datuks out from the magistrate's court in Putrajaya.

PUTRAJAYA: Two Datuks who are brothers have been remanded for three days as anti-graft officials further their probe into the Great Alonioners Trading Corporation Bhd (Gatco) issue.

One of the suspects is said to be the founder and chief executive officer of a famous restaurant chain and companies while the other suspect is the chain's chief operating officer.

The brothers, aged 58 and 54, were brought to the Putrajaya courts complex at 9.25am where a group of people, believed to be friends and family members, were waiting for them.

The duo were brought before magistrate Mohd Nor Hafidzuddin Yusoff.

The suspects were picked up by investigative officers at different locations in the Klang Valley on Monday as the probe into the case moved into high gear.

A group of settlers who invested in the scheme alleged there was corruption when the land was disposed of 13 years ago. The conflict over ownership of the land dated back to 1977 when Gatco was incorporated.

The company was formed by the National Union of Plantation Workers for the purpose of a land development scheme for its members where as part of the scheme, settlers paid a RM7,600 deposit each for their allocated plot of land.

However, the scheme failed and Gatco went bankrupt and the appointed liquidators began negotiations to sell the land, which was sold to Thamarai Holdings Sdn Bhd in 2006, kicking off the dispute.

MACC chief commissioner Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad then announced the setting up of a special task force to investigate the issue following information acquired from the Gatco Settlers Action Committee.

23. JITN will not have any power to influence MACC probes



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

"Not just the MACC, but also 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 Thursday, Low said the proposed JITN would 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 Wednesday, 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.

24. MACC may call back Richard Riot for more info over SDFC probe

IPOH: Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Richard Riot could be called back in by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to give more information in a probe into the alleged misappropriation of some RM40mil from the Skills Development Fund Corp (SDFC).

MACC chief Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad said Riot was at the commission's headquarters in Putrajaya on Friday to give his statement.

Dzulkifli said the investigating team may get Riot to give more information after going through the statements of the Minister and his political secretary.

"The processing of documents involving the funds would have gone through more than one person.

"There could be more people called in during the investigations," he said at the MACC state headquarters here Friday after the launch of anti-corruption-themed murals that are part of the commission's "Kembara Jelajah Anti Rasuah 2017" programme.

Riot arrived at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya at 10am and left at 8pm.

When asked by reporters why he spent such a long time at the MACC, the Minister replied: "biasalah" (it's normal).

Five people were detained over the case including Riot's political secretary, who was remanded for six days to assist in the probe.

Others included the corporation's chief executive, secretary, assistant financial officer and a company director.

The suspects were said to have collaborated with the company director to siphon Government allocations over the past two years.

25. Richard Riot gives statement to MACC

PUTRAJAYA: Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Richard Riot arrived at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission here Friday to give his statement in the probe into misappropriation of funds of the Skills Development Fund Corp (SDFC).

He arrived at the headquarters at about 10am accompanied by his bodyguard.

On Thursday, Riot's 61-year-old political secretary was remanded for six days to assist the MACC in the investigations.

Five people have been detained over the case. The others are the corporation's chief executive, secretary, assistant financial officer, and a company director.

All the suspects are said to have collaborated with the company director to siphon the Government allocations over the past two years.

SDFC is a statutory body under the Human Resources Ministry. It is responsible for providing financial assistance in the form of loans to individuals such as school leavers, graduates and others interested in pursuing skills training at public or private institutions.

26. MACC chief: More may be quizzed in RM40mil graft probe

KUALA LUMPUR: The MACC will summon more people to assist in its probe into the alleged misappropriation of some RM40mil from the Skills Development Fund Corp (SDFC) if necessary, said Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad.

"Investigations are ongoing and I hope people will give MACC the space and time needed to conduct them.

"If we need to call in more people or require more documents, we will do so," said the chief commissioner.

Dzulkifli was speaking to reporters after closing the Kembara Jelajah Anti Rasuah 2017 (Kejar '17) here on Saturday.

Five people were detained over the case including Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Richard Riot's political secretary, who was remanded for six days to assist in the probe.

Others included the corporation's chief executive, secretary, assistant financial officer and a company director.

The suspects were said to have collaborated with the company director to siphon Government allocations over the past two years.

Meanwhile, on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's submission of Barisan Nasional's candidates list for GE14 to the MACC, Dzulkifli said the commission would start work on the screening process.

"We will do the necessary vetting and inform the candidates of the results, then it is up to the party to make a decision.

"Candidates will be vetted but for the time being their family members will not be vetted," he said.

On MACC's investigations into the controversial hotel purchases by Felda Investment Corporation (FIC) in London and Kuching, Dzulkifli said the MACC was trying to wrap up investigations as soon as possible.

"We have not submitted our final findings yet, but we will try to finish everything and submit either next week or the week after," he said.