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Cop arrested for allegedly soliciting two sacks of onions

SEREMBAN: A police officer has been arrested for allegedly soliciting and accepting two sacks of onions from a lorry attendant when he could not produce a letter authorising him for travel during the conditional movement control order.

The suspect was arrested in Senawang at noon on Monday after a report was lodged by the complainant, said Seremban OCPD ACP Mohd Said Ibrahim.

"In his report, the lorry attendant claimed that his lorry was stopped at a checkpoint after exiting the Senawang toll plaza.

"A policeman then asked the lorry driver and the attendant to show a letter from their employer allowing them to transport goods but they could not do so.

"The complainant was then asked to make a payment failing which he was asked to hand over the onions," he said in a statement.

ACP Mohd Said said the case was being probed under Section 384 of the Penal Code for extortion.

Offenders can be jailed up to 10 years, or fine, or whipping or any of the two, upon conviction.

"We will carry out a through investigation and there will be no compromise," he added.

It is learnt that the incident happened on Nov 29 and the report was lodged at the Shah Alam police station the following day.



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Immigration officer at KLIA nabbed over RM22,000 bribe

PUTRAJAYA: A recent nationwide blitz against Immigration officers for corrupt activities has not stopped one officer at the KL International Airport from trying to pocket RM22,000.

A source said it was disappointing that the series of arrests of Immigration officers did little

to stop other personnel from continuing with their corrupt activities.

"Corrupt Immigration personnel on duty at entry points are helping foreigners, including problematic ones, into the country," the source close to the MACC told *The Star*.

On Wednesday, MACC arrested an Immigration officer stationed at the KLIA for demanding RM22,000 to release two Chinese nationals.

The 26-year-old grade KP19, officer was caught red-handed by Selangor MACC while accepting bribe money at a petrol station near KLIA.

"The suspect's activities are not part of the *Ops Selat* syndicate.

"Investigations revealed that he is acting alone and has been doing this for some time now," said the source.

Selangor MACC director Datuk Alias Salim confirmed the arrest, saying the case was being investi-

gated under Section 16 of the MACC Act.

The MACC earlier carried out a special operation codenamed *Ops Selat* which saw dozens of individuals, including 39 Immigration officers, arrested over the "stamping service" activities of a syndicate operating at several entry points.

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Explanation sought for delay in issuing receipts

I REFER to the reports "Move will preserve police image" (*The Star*, Nov 27) and "Lee: Anti-corruption plan timely but must be set up successfully" (Nov 28). Malaysians welcome the efforts taken by the police force to improve their services, act without fear or favour and, most importantly, to serve them with integrity and transparency.

With this in mind, I would like to share my recent experience at a traffic police station. In September 2019, I had an unfortunate traffic accident involving a public bus. Both parties lodged police reports.

The investigating officer concluded that I was the party at fault

and issued a traffic summons to me. I settled the summons two days later and was told by the staff at the counter to come back the next day to collect the receipt.

When I collected the receipt, I noticed that it was issued under another person's name. I asked about this and was told not to worry and that everything had been settled.

With this reassurance and this being my first experience of a traffic offence, I thought the case was settled. Furthermore, I did not receive any further news from the police.

To my utmost surprise, when I wanted to get my road tax

renewed recently, I was informed by my agent that my name had been blacklisted by the Road Transport Department (JPJ) because I have an outstanding summons.

I went to the same traffic police station where I had settled the summons to find out what had happened. The officer on duty, after checking the system, told me I could try to renew my road tax after two days without giving any explanation. I was also told that I had two more outstanding parking offences.

I decided to settle them there and then and was again told to come back two days later to collect

the receipts. I did as I was told and to my utter horror, I saw that the amount printed on the receipt was different from what I had been told to pay.

I would like to know the reason for the "error" in blacklisting me for the first incident, the delay in issuing official receipts and the discrepancy in the name and amount stated on the official receipts. Is this the standard procedure for all traffic offences? I would greatly appreciate an explanation from any police spokespersons or representatives on these matters.

**ROAD USER
Ampang**

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Businessman claims trial for attempting to bribe cop

By REMAR NORDIN
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JOHOR BARU: A businessman found himself in the dock for offering an RM45,000 bribe to avoid action against him and 65 others for violating the conditional movement control order at a night club.

Samudin Kambali, 47, offered money to an Assistant Commissioner of Police at the Johor Police Headquarters to avoid compounds and having to undergo urine testing.

He claimed trial before judge Kamaruddin Kamsun at the Magistrate's Court yesterday.

The offence was done at about 12.35am on Dec 2 at a night club in Jalan Kota Tinggi, Ulu Tiram, here.

He was charged under the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act and if convicted, could face a maximum of 20 years in jail and a fine no less than RM10,000 or five times the amount of the bribe.

The case was prosecuted by MACC deputy public prosecutor Suhaili Sapun while the accused was represented by Mohammad Muzammil Mohammad Hairiri.

Suhaili urged the court to set bail at RM40,000 with one surety.

Muzammil told the court that the accused had eight children and was cooperating with MACC.

The court offered bail of RM15,000 with one surety and ordered the accuse to report to the MACC office every month besides impounding his passport.

The court set Jan 20 for case re-mention.

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Ku Nan discharged but not acquitted

Judge grants order over new development that needs to be probed by MACC

By NURBAITI HAMDAN
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KUALA LUMPUR: A new development in the RM1mil corruption case involving Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor has resulted in him being granted a discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) by the High Court.

Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali granted the order of DNAA on the former Federal Territories minister after he was informed that the prosecution did not wish to continue with its case at this stage under Section 254(1) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Under the section, the prosecution may decline to prosecute further at any stage.

"The proceedings shall be stayed and the accused shall be discharged from the same," said the judge yesterday.

Justice Nazlan said the court did not order a full acquittal on the basis that the prosecution had a new development that needed to be investigated.

"Having heard the submissions, in my view, the reasons submitted by the learned Deputy Public Prosecutor on the reasons of a new development, and the need to investigate the same, are the basis that justifies this court not to order a full acquittal in accordance with Section 254(3) of the Code," he added.

Earlier, DPP Julia Ibrahim told the court that the case was initially scheduled to resume yesterday with the cross-examination of the second witness in the case, Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM) assistant registrar Muhammad Akmaludin Abdullah.

She said the prosecution had received an order to apply for the order of DNAA.

"There is a new development in the case that needs to be investigated further. The prosecution does not wish to waste the court's time as it is unclear how long this could be. We are unable to explain the details. What we can say is there is a complaint to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) regarding a witness in this case."

"Therefore, the prosecution asks for the accused to be granted a DNAA," she said.

DPP Julia also informed the court that the prosecution would inform the defence of the investigation status if the latter wished to know more.

Tengku Adnan's lawyer Datuk Tan Hock Chuan said it would be unfair if a DNAA was granted and asked that his client be given a full acquittal instead.

"My client was arrested on Nov 14, 2018, and was first charged in

the Sessions Court on Nov 15 that same year. The charge has been hanging on his head for two years.

"The prosecution did not give a clear time frame on how much longer they would need to investigate this new development," Hock Chuan said.

He gave precedent where a full acquittal was granted in the cases of former Sabah chief minister Tan Sri Musa Aman and former finance minister Lim Guan Eng.

In 2018, Tengku Adnan, who is Putrajaya MP, was accused of corruptly receiving for himself RM1mil from businessman Datuk Tan Eng Boon.

The money was allegedly deposited into Tengku Adnan's CIMB Bank account as an inducement to assist an application by Nucleus Properties Sdn Bhd to increase the company's plot ratio in regard to a development project on Lot 228, Jalan Semarak, Kuala Lumpur.

Tengku Adnan also faced an alternative charge, in his capacity as federal territories minister, of receiving for himself RM1mil from Eng Boon via a Public Bank cheque belonging to Pekan Nenas Industries Sdn Bhd which was deposited into his CIMB account, knowing that Eng Boon, as a director of Nucleus Properties, had connections with his official duties.

On Sept 17, 2019, Eng Boon pleaded guilty to an alternative charge of abetting Tengku Adnan and was fined RM1.5mil.

Tengku Adnan then filed an application to recuse Justice Nazlan from hearing the case on grounds that the judge had read and considered the facts in the case of Eng Boon.

Justice Nazlan dismissed Tengku Adnan's application which led him to appeal at the Court of Appeal.

In February, the appellate court ruled in favour of Tengku Adnan and ordered the trial to be heard before another judge on the grounds that Justice Nazlan could be biased.

However, on July 17, a three-member bench of the Federal Court reversed the Court of Appeal's decision and the case was remitted back before Justice Nazlan.

Tengku Adnan is also facing another corruption charge where he is accused of receiving a total of RM2mil from businessman Tan Sri Chai Kin Kong, who is Aset Kayamas Sdn Bhd (AKSB) director.

The trial High Court judge Justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan had concluded and the case was fixed for decision on Dec 21.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com



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Man claims extortion by MACC officers in police report

By FARIK ZOLKEPLI
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KUALA LUMPUR: Police have received a report by a businessman who claimed that he was extorted while in custody by a few Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officers and a man with the title of "Datuk".

The 32-year-old man was detained earlier at his home in Wangsa Melawati on Oct 1 in connection with money laundering

activities and a cheating scam involving Addy Kanna and Alvin Goh.

Both Addy and Goh are currently held under the Prevention of Crime Act (Poca).

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador said the report was lodged on Sunday while the MACC also lodged a report denying the allegation.

"Both reports are being investigated by Bukit Aman CID," he said when contacted.

It is learnt that the businessman claimed in the report that he was ordered to change the ownership of two cars to a Datuk to prevent any action against him over the money laundering probe.

He also claimed that a few MACC officers asked him to list the Datuk as his partner in a furniture business.

Separately, the MACC issued a statement to deny the allegation made by the businessman that he was threatened and extorted.

"We view the allegation seriously."

"He lodged a police report after two months of his release from MACC custody."

"The police report has since been spread by certain parties, resulting in our image being tarnished," it said.

The MACC called on the police to investigate the matter.

"We will not protect any party if the allegation is proven to be true."

"But if the allegation is baseless,

then the complainant must face justice," it said.

Recently, Bukit Aman CID director Comm Datuk Huzir Mohamed announced during a press conference that Addy and Goh were among those detained under Poca for two years.

"The decision was made by the Prevention of Crime Board on Nov 25-26."

"The detainees are placed in Simpang Renggam, Bentong and Pokok Sena," he said.

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Another report lodged over businessman's extortion claim

KUALA LUMPUR: Another police report has been lodged in connection with a businessman's claim that he was extorted by several anti-graft officers and a "Datuk".

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador, who disclosed this, said the latest report brought the total number of police reports lodged to three so far.

"The report was lodged by a man who was named by the businessman. He made the report to deny

the claim," he told reporters after presenting letters of appreciation to eight Kuala Lumpur police contingent CID officers who rejected bribes during an anti-illegal gambling operation codenamed Ops Dadu Firestorm.

"There is nothing hampering us from conducting an investigation. However, we need to look at a few things before taking further action. We will know the direction that we are going to take by Monday or

Tuesday," he said.

The IGP said the police must study the allegation thoroughly first.

"Our initial findings revealed that some parts of the allegation are more of a business spat between two individuals so we don't want to be embroiled in such a dispute," he said.

It was reported that police received a report by a businessman who claimed that he was extorted

while in custody by several Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officers and a man said to be a Datuk.

The 32-year-old businessman was detained earlier at his home in Wangsa Melawati on Oct 1 in connection with money-laundering activities and a cheating scam involving two persons who are currently being held under the Prevention of Crime Act (Poca).

The IGP had said the report was

lodge on Sunday while the MACC also lodged a report denying the allegation.

It is learnt that the businessman claimed that he was ordered to change the ownership of two cars to a Datuk to prevent any action against him over the money-laundering probe.

He also claimed that a few MACC officers asked him to list the Datuk as his partner in a furniture business.

Over 150 issues identified

11 of it are punitive matters, says Auditor-General

THERE are over 150 issues identified in the Auditor-General's Report 2019 Series 1 of which 11 are punitive matters, says Auditor-General Datuk Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid.

He, however, could not reveal detailed information on the matter because he did not want to interfere with the investigations to be carried out.

"I am unable to elaborate further because we do not want those involved or suspected to be involved to conceal information or evidence for these cases.

"If we mention, those involved may be able to hide information. Normally, we will discuss with the enforcement agencies first those cases which have punitive issues," he said during a press conference in Parliament after briefing the Public Accounts Committee on the Report.

Also present was PAC chairman Wong Kah Woh.

Nik Azman added that it was up to the respective enforcement agencies to determine if action could be taken on the concerns raised.

"Let's say the issue involves the MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) investigation, for example.

"When we present to the MACC our findings, the MACC will consider whether there is a case or not on their side. If MACC cannot take action, maybe police in terms of commercial crime (can).

"Or we can approach the Public Service Department if there are civil servants involved.

"They have a special committee so if civil servants are found to be involved, they can take disciplinary action against them," he said.



Working together: Nik Azman (right) and Wong showing the National Audit report card during a press conference at Parliament. — Bernama

Development status of 19,700 lots of govt land is unknown

THE development status of about 19,700 lots of government-owned land is unknown, says the Auditor-General's Report 2019.

The land represents 50.9% of Federal Government land covering 327,351.63ha belonging to 25 ministries and under the purview of the Federal Land Commissioner.

The report said the unknown status was due to the weaknesses in the MyeTaPP data management system which was developed in 2007.

It found that the weakness was due to inaccurate and uncoordinated land data between the Lands and Mines Director-General Department and Land and Mines Department.

The report noted that weaknesses in managing the land could result in increase in tax cost, encroachment, loss of revenue for the government and the land being reverted back to the respective state governments.

"Weaknesses in managing the land would also result in accumulation of arrears for those which have been leased or rented out.

"The disposal of land without justification and clear procedures including below reserve price would result in losses for the government," added the report.

RM75mil paid to researchers could not be verified

A TOTAL of RM75mil was paid to researchers whose involvement in research and development projects with the National Applied Research & Development Centre (Mimos) could not be ascertained.

This was the findings of the Auditor-General's Report 2019 with regard to salary payments to researchers under the 10th and 11th Malaysia Plans (RMK).

"A total of RM57.48mil and

RM13.11mil paid to contract project researchers, whose direct involvement in the implementation of the projects under RMK10 and RMK11, could not be verified," the AG stated in the report.

The salary payments were charged to the development fund which should not have been done, the report added.

Apart from this, the report also found that RM27.98mil and

RM4.33mil were also charged to the development fund under RMK10 and RMK11 to pay the salary of top ranking officials in Mimos, although funds for administrative expenditure was already provided.

They included salary and bonuses, among others, for the chief executive officer, senior vice-president, vice-president and chief technology officer.

Also noted in the AG report were

salary payments of RM4.26mil and RM21.59mil made to employment agencies supplying trainers, assistant researches and workers whose names could not be verified.

Mimos Bhd comes under the Science, Technology And Innovation Ministry.

The company was initially founded as the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems in 1985.

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Zahid, others to be summoned by PAC over LCS purchase

SEVERAL individuals, including former defence minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, will be summoned by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) over the acquisition of several Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) costing RM9bil.

PAC chairman Wong Kah Woh also said former navy chief Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Jaafar and a representative from Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNS), as the main

contractor of the LCS, will also be summoned to the proceedings that will resume early January next year.

"PAC will also conduct a visit to the LCS construction site in Lumut, Perak, in January.

"PAC is aiming to complete and table the report regarding the supply of six second generation LCS in the March Parliamentary session," Wong said yesterday.

At the same time, Wong said the

PAC has held four meetings and proceedings over the issue, where Auditor-General Datuk Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid, Defence Ministry secretary-general Datuk Muez Abd Aziz, former Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang, and several other individuals had been summoned.

He said the government must find a solution to the matter as soon as possible as the failure to complete the construction of the LCS is a

serious matter.

"Because it not only involves the weakness or failure in terms of administration, acquisition and finances, but it also impacts the nation's defence and security."

A littoral combat vessel is a relatively small vessel designed for operations near shore, with its size allowing it greater agility in the generally shallower areas of the sea, plus the ability to be quickly recon-

figured to play various roles.

Previously, it was reported that RM5.94bil was paid to BNS for the project that was commissioned in 2014, with the first vessel scheduled for delivery in April 2019.

However, none of the ships has been completed to date.

In September, former defence minister Liew Chin Tong claimed that RM1bil paid for the ships could not be traced.

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Govt officers under remand

MACC arrests five in connection with power abuse case

By JOSEPH KAOS JR
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PUTRAJAYA: Two senior government officers are among five men held under remand by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) over a power abuse case related to shipping cargo.

Magistrate Shah Wira Abdul Halim allowed the five, aged between 35 and 54, to be remanded until Dec 15 to facilitate

MACC's investigation.

The two senior government officers are ranked as a deputy director-general and a division secretary, while the other three suspects are shipping company directors.

According to a source, the senior officers had allegedly misused their position by issuing exemption letters to certain shipping companies, allowing them to carry heavy graded oil in Malaysian waters.

This goes against the government

ruling disallowing "single hull, double bottom" vessel types from carrying heavy grade oil.

The exemption letters were allegedly issued to the companies without any ministerial knowledge and endorsement.

The source said there had been many complaints from other shipping businesses that had to switch to "double hull, double bottom" tankers to carry heavy grade oil.

"The ruling is in line with international standards, in order to

avoid leakages and water pollution caused by single hull tankers," said the source.

The case is being investigated under Section 17 of the MACC Act.

Meanwhile, MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya confirmed the arrests but declined to comment further.

The five were arrested on Thursday night when they came to the MACC headquarters to have their statements recorded.

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Prosecution closes solar case

Judge fixes Feb 10 to acquit or order Rosmah to enter defence

KUALA LUMPUR: The prosecution in Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's corruption trial relating to the solar hybrid project for rural schools in Sarawak has wrapped up its case after calling 23 witnesses.

Senior deputy public prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram told High Court Judge Justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan that the prosecution was closing its case after its fifth witness, former education minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, who was recalled for cross-examination by the defence, completed his testimony.

Justice Mohamed Zaini ordered both parties to file their written submissions, the defence by Dec 28 and the prosecution by Jan 4 next year, and for the defence to reply to the prosecution by Jan 29 next year.

The judge also fixed Feb 10 next year for the parties to appear before him for verbal clarification, before deciding whether to acquit Rosmah, 69, of the corruption charges or order her to enter her defence.

Sri Ram had earlier said the prosecution was offering 10 prosecution witnesses, including former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to the defence.

Justice Mohamed Zaini turned down the prosecution's application to include as court evidence the audio recording of an alleged conversation involving Rosmah and her husband Najib and its transcript.

Rosmah, who was clad in a white baju kurung and headscarf, is facing one charge of soliciting RM187.5mil and two counts of



Day in court: Rosmah arriving at the Kuala Lumpur courts complex. — Bernama

receiving bribes totalling RM6.5mil from Jepak Holdings' former managing director Saidi Abang Samsudin.

She was initially supposed to be tried with her former special officer Datuk Rizal Mansor, 46, who was charged with four counts of soliciting and receiving bribes on behalf of Rosmah, over the project.

However, on Jan 8 this year, the court acquitted Rizal of the charges after the prosecution withdrew all four charges against him. He then became a key prosecution witness.

On Nov 15, 2018, Rosmah plead-

ed not guilty in the Sessions Court here to two counts of soliciting RM187.5mil and receiving RM1.5mil for projects to provide solar energy to rural schools in Sarawak.

On the first count, she was charged with dishonestly soliciting for herself, made through Rizal, a gratification of RM187.5mil, which is 15% of the value of the contract for the project, from Saidi.

It was as an inducement to help the company (Jepak Holdings) to secure the Hybrid Photovoltaic Solar System Integrated Project and Maintenance and Operation of

Genset/Diesel for 369 rural schools in Sarawak, worth RM1.25bil through direct negotiation from the Education Ministry.

She was charged with committing the offence at Lygon Cafe, G-24, Ground Floor, Sunway Putra Mall, 100, Jalan Putra, Chow Kit, here between March and April 2016.

On the second count, Rosmah was charged with dishonestly receiving for herself RM1,500,000 from Saidi for the same purpose at No. 11, Jalan Langgak Duta, Taman Duta, here on Sept 7, 2017.

She was charged under Section 16(a)(A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act, which provides for imprisonment of up to 20 years and fine of not less than five times the amount of the gratification or RM10,000, whichever is higher, upon conviction.

On April 10, 2019, Rosmah was charged again in the Sessions Court here with accepting gratification of RM5mil from Saidi through Rizal for helping Jepak Holdings to secure the same project at the same place in Jalan Langgak Duta.

All the cases had been transferred from the Sessions Court to the High Court for trial which began on Feb 5 this year.

Rosmah is also facing 12 charges for money laundering involving RM7,097,750 and five counts of failing to declare her income to the Inland Revenue Board.

This brings the total number of charges against her to 20. — Bernama

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Action taken against four cops

Police personnel face the music for tying the knot without permission

KOTA BARU: Four police personnel from the Kelantan police contingent have been subjected to disciplinary action this year for tying the knot without obtaining permission from their superiors, says state police chief DCP Shafien Mamat (pic).

He said that it was an offence for any police officer and personnel to tie the knot without obtaining permission from the department heads.

For the Kelantan contingent, permission from the state police chief or his deputy was required, he said.

"Usually, if any police personnel is planning to get married, we will do a background check whether the spouse-to-be has a criminal record," he said, adding that five personnel were found to have committed a similar offence last year.

"If the individual is found to be a

criminal or on the wanted list, it will definitely cause problems," he said.

"If we need to, then we will reject the application."

Shafien added that the four cases (marrying without permission) were among 53 offences involving police personnel recorded in the state this year.

Other offences were involvement in criminal activities (11

cases), drugs (nine), corruption (seven), absenteeism (two) and various other offences.

He said that of the total cases reported, 14 cases were subjected to disciplinary action.

Among the disciplinary actions that could be imposed on personnel and officers involved include dismissal, demotion, salary cuts, fines and warnings, he said. — Bernama



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'Whistleblowers are protected'

MACC: Laws set in place to safeguard subordinates for speaking up

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PUTRAJAYA: Be rest assured that superiors who take action against subordinates for acting as whistleblowers for raising the alarm on corrupt acts will be dealt with, anti-graft busters tell civil servants.

"The Whistleblower Protection Act has specific provision to deal with those who take action against them," said Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Datuk Seri Azam Baki.

"Civil servants need not be afraid to report wrongdoing happening in their department or agency."

"We have laws to protect them for doing the right thing. In fact, we have laws to deal with those who take action against them for doing the right thing," he said.

Azam said the Whistleblower Protection Act assures complainants, including civil servants, that they can channel complaints of corrupt activities without fear of their identity being known or have action taken against them by superiors.

"There are laws under the Act to protect whistleblowers."

"If they are sacked for being a whistleblower, we will have them reinstated and action will be taken against their superiors for removing them from their position," he said.

Azam pointed to a case in September where the MACC made a landmark case when it charged a deputy director of an agency with inciting his superior to fire a whistleblower for alerting the anti-graft body on his misconduct.

That was the first time that the MACC had taken an individual to

court for such an offence since the Act was enforced in 2010.

According to Section 10(3)(b), a person is deemed to take detrimental action against a whistleblower if the person incites or permits another person to take or threaten to take the detrimental action.

Azam said it is important for civil servants to report wrongdoings not just to stop corruption but also leakages.

"Plugging leakages is as important as fighting graft. As government officers, we are duty-bound to ensure public funds are spent efficiently," he said.

Azam said MACC will also look for weaknesses and loopholes in the systems and procedures in cases that are brought to their attention.

"Not all cases end up with prosecution. If in the course of investiga-

tion we find weaknesses, we will advise the department concerned to rectify it."

"This is an equally important process as our proposals can help reduce leakages in public funds," he said.

Azam explained that providing advice to correct weaknesses in systems and procedures is part of the commission's role as stated under Section 7 of the MACC Act.

Public Service Department's director-general Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman had reminded civil servants that they were duty-bound to report corruption and could face disciplinary action for failing to do so.

His reminder came after the MACC revealed that only about 0.01% of the 1.6 million civil servants in Malaysia are brave enough to report on corrupt practices in

their respective departments and agencies.

However, Cuepacs president Adnan Mat said there is still fear among low-ranking officers to report instances of corruption, especially if it involves a superior.

On suggestions that Section 17A of the MACC Act be extended to cover government departments and agencies, Azam explained this might not be suitable as the law is meant to ensure that corporations are free of corrupt practices.

"We already have sufficient provisions under existing Penal Code and MACC Act to deal with errant government officers," he said.

Adnan had made the suggestion saying that the move would place collective responsibility on the government department with accountability going down the chain of command of the entire department.

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Inspector with RM1mil in bank accounts being probed for involvement in crime

SHAH ALAM: A police Inspector with RM1mil in his bank accounts is among 29 police personnel currently being probed by Bukit Aman for their association to Addy Kanna.

Addy had been detained on Oct 3 for suspected involvement in big-scale Macau scams, illegal online gambling and working with a foreign scam syndicate.

A police personnel with the rank of Deputy Comm was also one of the individuals under investigation, said Bukit Aman Integrity and Standard Compliance Department (JIPS) director Comm Datuk Zamri Yahya.

When police questioned the Inspector about the money, he claimed it was from his father, he added.

"We will investigate the source of the money in more detail," he told reporters after witnessing the handing over of duties ceremony for the Selangor police chief here yesterday.

Initial investigations involved four policemen, but as the probe went on, they received more and more names.

"Our investigation is on the aspect of conduct and discipline. We are looking into their lifestyle, property ownership, overseas travel without permission and movements.

"We hope to conclude our investigations by next month," he said.

On the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) investigation into the same case, Comm Zamri said his department would follow up on involvement of police personnel in the syndicate.

It was reported that another police report has been lodged in connection with claims by a businessman that he was extorted while in custody by a few MACC officials and a man with a "Datuk" title.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador was quoted saying the latest report brings the total number of police reports lodged to three.

The 32-year-old man was detained earlier at his home in Wangsa Melawati on Oct 1 in connection with money laundering activities and a cheating scam involving Addy Kanna and Alvin Goh.

Both Addy and Goh along with two other policemen are currently held under the Prevention of Crime Act (Poca).

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Immigration officers hauled to court

Seven may have links to syndicate that misused border entry, exit stamps

By MOHD FARHAAN SHAH, N.
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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has brought to court seven Johor Immigration Department officers linked to bribery activities involving a syndicate which misused the country's border entry and exit stamps.

The seven were charged yesterday in five states after the "Ops Selat" operation in Johor on Nov 16.

Two were charged at the Kota Baru Sessions Court, two at the Johor Baru Sessions Court and one each at the Butterworth Sessions Court, Shah Alam Sessions Court and Melaka Sessions Court.

One more is expected to be charged tomorrow at the Kuala Terengganu Sessions Court.

In Butterworth, Akashah Roslan, 38, was sentenced to 30 days in jail and fined RM12,000 after he pleaded guilty to three counts of bribery as an inducement to misuse the immigration stamp.

He admitted having received a total of RM3,060 through bank transactions in Jalan Mahsuri, Bayan Baru, Penang, from one Mohd Azril Azizan between June 22, 2018 and Sept 14, 2018.

Judge Norhayati Mohamad ordered that the jail term to start from the day of sentencing.



Facing the law: The accused were brought to court to face charges.

In Johor Baru, officers Azhar Ahmad M Salbi, 27, and Syafik Abu Khalipah, 25, were slapped with eight charges of bribery between them. They were brought before judge Kamarudin Kamsun.

Azhar pleaded guilty to an alternative charge of accepting RM1,250 for issuing a stamp certificate of exit and entry of foreign passports two

years ago.

Azhar admitted to receiving RM500 and RM750 from two agents through his bank account between Feb 20 and April 9, 2018.

He was charged under Section 25(1) of the MACC Act and can be sentenced under Section 25(2) of the same Act, which carries a fine not more than RM100,000 or impris-

onment not more than 10 years or both, upon conviction.

Kamarudin sentenced Azhar to 12 months in jail from the date of his arrest and slapped him with a fine of RM20,000 in default six months' imprisonment.

Syafik pleaded not guilty to seven bribery charges involving RM24,395 from the two same agents between Oct 22 and Sept 22 last year.

Syafik also pleaded not guilty to two alternative charges of accepting RM21,275 between Oct 22 and Dec 29, 2019 and RM3,120 at another time.

Kamarudin set Jan 21 for mention and fixed bail at RM40,000 in one surety.

Syafik was ordered to surrender his passport to the court and to report to the nearest MACC office once a month until the case is over.

In Kota Baru, Bernama reported that two officers were charged with 33 counts of bribery involving RM154,340.

Mohamad Hariss Rosli, 27, who was charged with 31 counts of accepting bribes, pleaded guilty to 18 charges and claimed trial to the remaining 13 charges.

Fasmawi Ab Wahab, 24, pleaded guilty to two charges against him.

Mohamad Hariss was charged with 31 counts of obtaining RM152,940 from individuals at a Maybank Islamic branch between April 2018 and November 2019.

Fasmawi admitted accepting RM1,400 from an individual at a Maybank Islamic branch in Jalan Hulu Pasar, Tumpat, between Feb 26 and March 1, 2019.

Judge Zaman Mohd Nor did not allow the accused bail and set Dec 22 for sentencing.

In Melaka, another officer was fined RM30,000 after he pleaded guilty to three counts of accepting bribes relating to the abuse of border entry and exit stamps in 2018.

Muhammad Shafiq Suboh, 29, pleaded guilty before judge Mohd Nasir Nordin to receiving RM360, RM320 and RM800 via his bank account at CIMB Bank between July and Sept 2018 from an individual as an inducement to issue the stamp without leaving the country.

In Shah Alam, Immigration officer Ballyan Mohd Bhanudin claimed trial to four counts of receiving RM7,120 in bribes since September last year.

He also claimed trial to four alternative charges of misusing entry and exit stamps at Malaysian borders.

The court set RM50,000 bail for all charges, ordered the accused to surrender his passport to the court and fixed Jan 18 for mention.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com



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Female police sergeant denies bribery charges

KOTA KINABALU: A female police sergeant was charged in the Sessions Court here with receiving a RM3,000 bribe from a suspect involved in a theft case.

Sjn Nora Alun, 42, who is with the Kota Kinabalu city police, pleaded not guilty before judge Abu Bakar Manat to two bribery-related charges under the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act.

She is accused of agreeing to receive a sum of RM3,000 from one Mohd Saiful Jamil as an inducement not to continue investigations into a theft case linked to him.

Nora is alleged to have committed the offence on Feb 13 at Restoran Taufik in Inanam where she agreed to receive the money.

The second offence involves receiving the money at the Kota Kinabalu district Criminal Investigations Department (CID) office on Feb 17.

The court fixed Jan 19 for case management.

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Men nabbed for impersonating MACC officers

Four remanded after being suspected of soliciting bribes for reduced charges



Being led out: The four suspects being escorted out after the remand order at the Putrajaya magistrate's court. — Bernama

By JOSEPH KAOS Jr
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PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has busted a syndicate fronted by a "Datuk Roy" which claimed to have the authority to "settle" corruption cases.

Four men from the group impersonated as a Deputy Public Prosecutor, as well as senior MACC officers, to someone who would be facing a corruption charge, said a source.

Led by the mastermind "Datuk Roy", who introduced himself as a "MACC director", the group would claim to have ways to help ensure that the person would have a lighter charge in an ongoing graft case.

They also claimed they could reopen a frozen bank account belonging to the accused – in exchange for a bribe amounting to RM60,000.

To make their identities appear legitimate, the group even entered the MACC headquarters compound here and posed for photographs.

"However, their movements were recorded by closed circuit TV at the headquarters," said the source.

The group was caught in the act at a hotel here in a trap set up by the MACC.

"Datuk Roy" and two others were arrested at the hotel at 4.30pm on Wednesday. The fourth suspect was arrested at his home in Melaka later that night.

These four men were taken by the MACC to the Putrajaya magistrate's court yesterday morning for their remand application.

Magistrate Shah Wira Abdul Halim ordered that the four men be remanded for six days until Dec 22 to assist in MACC's investigations.

It is learned that the MACC was also tracking down a woman, who is believed to be another member of the group.

Meanwhile, MACC chief commissioner Datuk Seri Azam Baki said members of the public should be wary about the scam of people impersonating as MACC officers and soliciting bribes later.

"These individuals would claim to know MACC senior officers and would show cards purportedly belonging to the officers as well as photos of the officers at MACC functions.

"These tactics are used to fool the victims. They would then ask for bribes to get your name cleared.

"So if you are contacted by people claiming to be MACC officers or Deputy Public Prosecutors, please refer to the commission and seek confirmation," said Azam in a statement.

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12 months' jail and RM2mil fine

Pending the overturn against his conviction for personally receiving RM2mil from a property developer, Ku Nan is barred from contesting elections. But he remains free and can continue to serve as Putrajaya MP until all options of appeal are exhausted. > See reports on page 4 by NURBAITI HAMDAN and QISHIN TARIQ



Ku Nan gets jail and fine for graft

High Court finds him guilty of receiving RM2mil from a property developer

By NURBAITI HAMDAN
and QISHIN TARIQ
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KUALA LUMPUR: It's a fallacy to think a wealthy person is incapable of committing wrong for financial gains, said Justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan in delivering his judgment on Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, better known as Ku Nan.

The High Court judge found the former minister guilty of receiving RM2mil for himself from a property developer and sentenced him to 12 months in jail along with a RM2mil fine.

The subject of Tengku Adnan's wealth was highlighted in Justice Zaini's 87-page judgment.

"The accused maintained he is a man of means. I accept the accused's contention that he did not intend to brag when declaring his worth and that he merely wanted to assert that RM2mil was not an amount that would entice him.

"RM2mil, in my view, is a substantial amount of money, even for a millionaire," he said yesterday.

The Putrajaya MP, also popularly known as Ku Nan, had infamously said in his trial that "RM2mil is just like my pocket money".

He was charged in his capacity as a public servant, namely Federal Territories Minister, with having received for himself a total of RM2mil from businessman Tan Sri

Chai Kin Kong, who is Aset Kayamas Sdn Bhd (AKSB) director, via a Hong Leong Islamic Bank cheque belonging to the company which was deposited into a CIMB account owned by Tadmansori Holdings Sdn Bhd (THSB), which Tengku Adnan has an interest in, and is known to AKSB as being related to his official duties.

In his defence, Tengku Adnan said he raised the RM2mil as a political donation to fund the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar by-elections, but this was shot down by the court.

Justice Zaini said he was unable to accept that the accused was entrusted to raise those funds as the two constituencies were not in his domain as the chairman of the Federal Territories Umno.

The money, he said, remained in Tengku Adnan's Tadmansori account for his own benefit and there was no evidence to show the accused had withdrawn the money to pay for the by-elections' expenses.

Calling this defence as an afterthought, Justice Zaini said the accused had used the company as a "facade to receive the fruits of his crime".

The court also did not accept the evidence on two budget sheets by two defence witnesses, coordinator for Barisan Nasional's youth volunteer programme Datuk Zakaria

"In the accused's own words, RM2mil is just pocket money to him. The sentence must be deterrent so that other people would not repeat it.**"**

DPP Julia Ibrahim

Dullah and former Sungai Besar by-election machinery director Datuk Rizalman Mokhtar.

Both sheets, he said, were a simple one-page sheet itemising what they claimed to have used for the by-elections but the supporting receipts and documents to support the budget sheets were disposed of.

The judge said it was too convenient that the expenses said to be incurred in the sheets totalled up to just over RM2mil and therefore the court was disinclined to accept the testimonies of the two witnesses as well as their budget sheets.

After a maximum evaluation, Justice Zaini said the prosecution had proven its case against the accused.

"I therefore find the accused

guilty and convict him on the charge against him," he added.

During a short break prior to sentencing, Tengku Adnan's wife Datin Seri Angraini Sentiayak was seen visibly upset with the verdict.

Lawyer Datuk Tan Hock Chuan submitted that his client was a first-time offender and contributed significantly to the nation.

"He has served in the Cabinet and Parliament for a period of 17 years. The crime in this case is not a heinous one," he said.

Tan asked the court not to impose a custodial sentence but to give a fine of less than RM2,000 in order for his client to retain his position as the Putrajaya MP.

He said Tengku Adnan is on medication for hypertension and high cholesterol.

"We plead for justice to be tempered with mercy that there will be no custodial sentence," he added.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Julia Ibrahim, however, objected and said that the sentence sought by the defence was inappropriate in this case.

"In the accused's own words, RM2mil is just pocket money to him. The sentence must be a deterrent so that other people would not repeat it.

"The court should not be giving a fine of less than RM2,000 in a case that involves RM2mil, which is just pocket money to the accused,"

she said.

DPP Julia said MPs "come and go" and for every general election or a by-election, there would be changes to the seats.

She proposed for a RM2mil fine and a custodial sentence, similar to what was handed over to former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo who was jailed for one year for corruption in 2011.

Justice Zaini said Tengku Adnan was not the first high-ranking public servant and politician to be convicted of a crime and the court was inclined to follow precedent in previous cases.

"There have been others. Everyone is equal before the law. I do not doubt that he has served the country for many years but the sentence must reflect the crime and be a deterrent to others," the judge said.

He passed the sentences and ordered another six months in jail if the accused defaulted on the sentences.

"The sentence is to run from the date of judgment," he said.

Tan asked for a stay of execution on both sentences and this was allowed by the court.

Tengku Adnan left the court complex with his family immediately and did not stop to speak to the press.

Tan told the press that the defence would file an appeal as soon as possible.

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Guan Eng pleads not guilty

Graft trial involving Penang undersea tunnel project to start in June

By QISHIN TARIQ
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KUALA LUMPUR: Lim Guan Eng has pleaded not guilty to two amended charges of corruption involving the Penang undersea tunnel project. The trial will take place in June.

The first amended charge is for receiving RM3.3mil as an inducement to help Datuk Zarul Ahmad Mohd Zulkifli's company secure the undersea tunnel project valued at RM6.3bil.

Lim is alleged to have received the bribe in his capacity as the chief minister of Penang then, at the Chief Minister's office in the Komtar building in George Town, Penang, between January 2011 and August 2017.

The amended charge removes a sentence which states that he had a direct stake in the undersea tunnel project.

The second amended charge is for soliciting gratification from Zarul Ahmad to help the company secure the project.

The alleged bribe was in the form of 10% of the profit that would be



Day in court:

Lim and his wife Betty Chew leaving the Kuala Lumpur court complex.
— AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

made by the company.

The amendment added a time frame to the accusation, stating that it occurred between 12.30am and 2am, near The Gardens Hotel at Lingkaran Syed Putra, Mid Valley City, here. No date was added, with the charge sheet only stating March 2011.

Both charges are punishable

under Section 24(1) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009, with up to 20 years' prison and a fine of not less than RM100,000 or five times the value of the gratification, upon conviction.

During case management yesterday, deputy public prosecutor Wan Shaharuddin Wan Ladin said the prosecution would be calling 80 to

90 witnesses for the trial.

Lim's lawyer Gobind Singh Deo applied to have the various charges heard together in one trial before the Kuala Lumpur court, as the charges originated in both Kuala Lumpur and George Town.

Gobind also requested for a later trial date so that he could go over eight volumes of case documents handed over by the prosecution.

Meanwhile, Lim is also facing two counts of misappropriation of property for causing two plots of land belonging to the Penang government worth RM208.8mil to be disposed of by two companies linked to the undersea tunnel project.

He is alleged to have committed the offence at the Penang Land and Mines Office in Komtar on Feb 17, 2015 and March 22, 2017.

The charges under Section 403 of the Penal Code are punishable by up to five years' prison, whipping and a fine, upon conviction.

Sessions Court judge Azura Alwi agreed to have the charges heard together and fixed 31 days for the trial to run from June to December, starting on June 8.

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Shahrir seeks to recuse judge from hearing application

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Felda chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Ab Samad, who is facing a charge of failing to declare to the Inland Revenue Board (IRB) RM1mil received from former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, has applied to disqualify a High Court judge from presiding over his bid to transfer the case from the Sessions Court to the High Court.

Lawyer Datuk Firoz Hussein Ahmad Jamaluddin told Justice Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali yesterday that he had filed the application.

Based on the affidavit filed on Dec 17, Shahrir applied to the court for an order for Justice Mohd Nazlan to recuse himself from hearing the matter and for it to be transferred to another High Court

as "there is a real possibility of bias".

"Through the charges filed against me, I have been accused of receiving income from Datuk Seri Najib Razak amounting to RM1mil through an AmlIslamic Bank Bhd cheque ... I have also been advised by my lawyer and truly believe that Datuk Seri Najib has been tried and convicted, and was sentenced on July 28.

"The judge who tried and sentenced Datuk Seri Najib in the case was judge Mohd Nazlan, the same judge who is scheduled to hear the application to transfer my case.

"Among the reasons raised through the cause papers to support the application to transfer my case is that the cheque that was allegedly given to me came from Datuk Seri Najib," he said.

“The judge who tried and sentenced Datuk Seri Najib in the case was judge Mohd Nazlan, the same judge who is scheduled to hear the application to transfer my case.”

Tan Sri Shahrir Ab Samad

Deputy public prosecutor Mohd Afif Ali then informed the court that the prosecution needed time

to file an affidavit-in-reply.

"The respondent requests for one to two weeks to answer the affidavit," he said.

Firoz Hussein also applied for two weeks to respond to the affidavit-in-reply to be submitted by the prosecution.

Following which, Justice Mohd Nazlan set Feb 8 to hear the application.

Shahrir is also represented by lawyers Tan Sri Dzulkifli Ahmad, who is former Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner, and Syahrul Syazwan Salehin, while Mohd Afif is assisted by deputy public prosecutor Natrah Fareha Rahmad.

Shahrir, 71, is charged with money laundering by not stating his real income in the Income Tax Return Form for Assessment Year

2013, which is a violation of Section 113(1)(a) of the Income Tax Act 1967.

He allegedly took the RM1mil, believed to be from unlawful activities, through a cheque dated Nov 27, 2013.

The cheque was allegedly deposited into his Public Islamic Bank account on Nov 28, 2013.

He was charged with committing the offence at IRB, Duta branch, Government office complex, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Halim here on April 23, 2014.

The charge under Section 4(1)(a) of the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 provides for a maximum fine of RM5mil, imprisonment of up to five years, or both, if found guilty.
— Bernama

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Immigration officer charged in hospital

SHAH ALAM: An Immigration officer, who is being treated in a private hospital for high blood pressure and heart problems, was charged with accepting RM3,000 as an inducement to not pursue an investigation he was conducting.

A special room in the hospital was turned into a courtroom where Zulkifly Zapar, who was in a wheelchair, was charged with the offence yesterday.

However, the Senior Deputy

Room in hospital turned into courtroom

Assistant Director of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (ATIPSOM) Division pleaded not guilty to the charge, which was read out before Sessions Court Judge Azura Abwi.

Zulkifly, 46, was charged in his capacity as an agent of the Immigration Department, to have corruptly accepted RM3,000 as gratification

from a man, through a woman, as an inducement not to take action over an investigation he was conducting.

The offence was allegedly committed in Jalan Persiaran Perdana, Precinct 3, Putrajaya, here on Nov 21, 2019.

Azura allowed him bail of RM15,000 with one surety and also ordered him to surrender his pass-

port to the court, report himself at the MACC headquarters every month, as well as to not intimidate witnesses in the case.

Deputy Public Prosecutor from MACC Siti Noor Hafizan Zakaria prosecuted, while lawyer M. Rishee represented the accused.

The court set Jan 21 for mention. Earlier, during the proceedings at

the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court, Zulkifly's younger sister informed the court that her brother could not be at the court as he had been admitted to a private hospital in Shah Alam.

DPP Siti Noor Hafizan then requested that the charge be read out to him at the hospital.

She also told the court that when the case came up last on Dec 11, the accused was also not present.

— Bernama

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Boost for Immigration services

No more stamping, counters to be watched, new system in 2023

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PUTRAJAYA: Manual stamping of passports will be replaced with digital printing once a new integrated system kicks off in 2023.

The new system and installation of CCTV cameras at counters are among measures to boost the efficiency of immigration services and to deter its officers from committing wrongdoing.

Immigration Department director-general Duttak Khairul Danimer Daud said the National Integrated Immigration System would end old practices, including manual stamping, while document holders would be given an ID recognised by the system.

Stamping would be replaced by digital printing of social visit passes on passports, he explained.

"When a foreign traveller comes to Malaysia after his first visit, he can go through the autogate instead of queuing to check his passport," he said.

The project, estimated to cost RM1.2bil, is expected to be fully operational in 2023.

Khairul said CCTVs would be installed at immigration counters at entry points including in KLIA, KLIA2, Johor Baru and Kota Kinabalu so that "activities at these counters can be closely monitored".

This exercise, expected to kick off next year, is estimated to cost about RM20mil.

On the recent arrests of immigration officers over their involvement in a syndicate providing "stamping facilities", Khairul said he was disappointed with them and that the law must take its course to deal with such cases.

"When I took office last year, I told my officers there will be no compromise if their actions cause the department's integrity to be questioned."

"I will do what I can to look after their welfare but there will be zero tolerance against wrongdoings," he said.

Last month, the Malaysian Anti-

Corruption Commission crippled activities of a syndicate providing "stamping facilities" to foreigners and illegal immigrants and nabbed scores of syndicate members, including 39 immigration officers, in a nationwide sting operation code-named Ops Selat.

The syndicate is believed to have raked RM14.5mil in the past three years and is said to have provided "services" to at least 30,000 foreign workers and illegal immigrants.

Khairul said when the new immigration system was up and running, passports no longer need to be stamped and would instead be scanned into the system.

"No one can claim to offer stamping services. If passports are stamped, we will know something is not right."

"There will also be more spot checks on those at counters to ensure the no handphone policy is strictly followed. This is to stop them making deals with foreigners and illegal immigrants," he said.

Regulation dictates that officers

on counter duties are not allowed to bring handphones.

For next year, Khairul said the immigration's agenda would include ensuring the smooth implementation of the recalibration plan and setting a target of 250,000 illegal immigrants participating in a recalibration programme.

"We will also be focusing on improving our services through the use of technology and to make it compulsory for our services to be paid via electronic or e-payment," he said.

Under the Labour Recalibration Plan, employers from four sectors will be allowed to legally employ undocumented foreign workers while the Repatriation Recalibration Plan is aimed to encourage undocumented immigrants volunteering to return to their homelands.



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Jakim not at fault, say industry players

Meat cartel scandal said to involve graft at several levels in import chain

By ZAKIAH KOYA
and MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PETALING JAYA: The meat cartel scandal which has raised suspicion on imported halal meat in the country happens due to corruption and the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) is not to be blamed, say halal industry players.

The scandal, which the players said happens every now and then, involves corruption at several levels and authorities investigating the issue should look at all others in the import chain.

"Halal is not the issue in the meat cartel as Jakim is not in charge of imported meat. The issue is corruption," said Datuk Shukri Abdullah, the founder of the world's biggest halal trade exhibition, Malaysian International Halal Showcase (Mihas).

He said imported meat goes through port authorities, Customs, and the Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services Department (Maqis).

"These three are the main channels which the meat has to pass

through before it reaches the AP holders.

"Jakim can only go in and check the premises once in a while and every two years, all halal certificates have to be renewed. This is a stringent process, some takes up to six months.

"It is not right that Jakim is made to bear the brunt for the meat cartel as the halal logo was even falsified," he said responding to calls from the Malay Consultative Council advisory board member Tun Hanif Omar for Jakim to be revamped and relinquish its duty in issuing halal certification and the role be taken over by the Malaysian Halal Council.

Shukri said halal certification was a big business in many countries and in Malaysia, Jakim was put in charge of handling it and not for profits.

He said the cost of halal certification was cheap which was less than RM1,500 as the government subsidised it that many do not realise.

"By killing Jakim, many would be able to make halal certification into a big money spinner if they get the contract. This was tried before.

"The contract to issue halal certification was given to a private company and many were angry as it became very expensive and Jakim decided to take it back.

"A government agency - Halal Development Corporation - later took over the task and they too failed and it was back to Jakim once again," he said.

Malaysian Halal Professional Board trainer Ahmad Aminurasyid said Jakim has no powers to investigate or prosecute those who were involved in such syndicates as their role was merely as the producer of the halal certificates.

"The halal meat import permit for livestock is issued by the Department of Veterinary Services and the meat enters Malaysia through Customs and Maqis.

"The company and business licences of companies handling imported halal meat are issued by local councils and the Companies Commission of Malaysia.

"The forging and abuse of the halal logo comes under the purview of the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry.

"So, why is Jakim the one that

needs to be revamped over this meat cartel?" asked Ahmad who has been in the halal industry in various roles for more than a decade.

Meanwhile, several witnesses who are employees of the companies involved in the cartel, were called by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) for their statements to be recorded.

MACC chief Datuk Seri Azam Baki said they wanted to interview several other witnesses but it seems that they have gone off radar.

"We cannot locate or contact them," he told *The Star* yesterday, adding that with the cooperation of other agencies, MACC managed to get hold of documents for it to go through to see if there were elements of corruption.

Azam pointed out that MACC's investigations into the case was to determine if there were elements of corruption involved in the process of importing the meat.

"Let it be clear that we are not investigating or determining the halal status of the produce.

"Our scope of investigation is to identify wrongdoings such as sub-

mitting false claims, corruption and power abuse, which allowed the goods to be brought into the country," he said.

Azam said the MACC had sought the cooperation of other authorities, including the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, Customs and Maqis to probe the matter.

Recently, authorities busted a cartel that had been importing meat from Ukraine, Brazil, Argentina and China, and packaged them with the halal logo.

The cartel, believed to have been operating for a few years, allegedly used a warehouse in Senai, Johor as a location to make fake labels and stamps to be pasted on packages of uncertified halal status meat.

Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Rosol Wahid told the Dewan Negara on Tuesday that tests on frozen meat taken from the warehouse showed that it was not pork, horse or kangaroo meat.

This was the outcome of the tests carried out by the Chemistry Department on samples of frozen meat taken from the warehouse, he said.