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Return the money or face stern action, says HR Minister

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PUTRAJAYA: Employers and training providers who made false claims and misappropriated funds for the PenjanaKerjaya programme should refund the money to avoid severe action, says the Human Resources Minister.

Datuk Seri M. Saravanan said the ministry had "zero tolerance" against parties misappropriating and abusing government funds.

"I urge those who have committed wrongdoings in their PenjanaKerjaya claims application to step forward and make refunds."

"Employers and training providers should not be making false

claims as the financial resources are meant to support important government efforts to strengthen the national labour market," he said in a statement yesterday.

PenjanaKerjaya was introduced in 2020 under the National Economic Recovery Plan (Penjana), offering financial incentives of between RM600 and RM1,000 to employers for each employee or apprentice employed for up to six months.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the Social Security Organisation (Socso) have launched an operation codenamed *Ops Hire* to probe claims that certain employers and training providers submitted false claims under

the programme.

Socso also announced that it was suspending payments totalling RM423mil for the PenjanaKerjaya programme following the probe.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Seri Dr Mohammed Azman Aziz Mohammed said the action was based on data analysis and continuous monitoring by the anti-fraud, ethics and integrity division.

"The division is also working closely with the finance division and the employment insurance system office to ensure that each application is thoroughly reviewed before any payment is made to incentive recipients," he said in a statement.

Mohammed Azman said that to

date, Socso had made payments totalling RM1.72bil to employers and workers under the programme, involving 45,379 employers to place 327,789 job seekers.

"Those found to have abused the fund or submitted applications without fulfilling the conditions are to come forward and make repayments voluntarily, or to contact Socso to resolve the matter before any action is taken," he said.

In another development, the MACC remanded three more individuals yesterday, bringing the tally of arrests in connection to the probe to 40.

A senior chief clerk in Johor Baru believed to have received RM5,000 from a company owner as a reward

for helping the company make claims under the Hiring Incentives Programme, was remanded for three days. Two other suspects arrested in Penang were remanded for six days.

They were believed to have submitted documents containing false information to Socso online, being purported claims for incentive payments for hiring and training workers under Penjana.

On Thursday, a company proprietor, directors, managers and shareholders were among 37 individuals remanded over the MACC's probe over allegations of fake claims and misappropriation of funds under the programme said to total RM100mil.

6 Nation

SUNDAY STAR, SUNDAY 17 JULY 2022

Covid-19 Current situation as at July 15

MR.DIY 360° Rotational Spray Mop
Lightweight High Absorbency

RM29
RRP: RM60



New cases	Total cases	Home quarantine	Hospitalised	Total recovered	VACCINATED IN MALAYSIA	TOTAL TWO DOSES	TOTAL 1st BOOSTERS	TOTAL 2nd BOOSTERS
5,230	4,613,998	39,703 (96.3%)	1,411 (3.4%)	4,536,946 (2,927 cases)	(Daily figures in brackets)	27,364,708 (9,144)	16,161,711 (1,381)	203,600 (10,661)
Perlis 8	Kedah 76	Penang 219	Perak 399	Selangor 1,877	Kelantan 48	Terengganu 23	Pahang 70	Negeri Sembilan 236
Melaka 140	Johor 107	Sabah 261	Sarawak 68	FT K. Lumpur 1,584	FT Putrajaya 102	FT Labuan 12		

New features on MySejahtera

Health records and vaccinations among info listed on app

PETALING JAYA: MySejahtera has rolled out new features that allow users to check their health records, says Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

"Health screenings record and our children's vaccination record can also be seen on MySejahtera."

"Update your app starting from today to have these new features," he said on his Twitter account yesterday.

In the two pictures alongside his tweet, the health record of a seven-year-old boy, including his latest health report at a clinic, was shown.

In the health report, the boy's last updated height, weight, body mass index (BMI), cholesterol level, blood glucose level and blood pressure reading were shown, complete with a health screening summary below.

The app also listed the boy's vaccines and his next vaccine appointment date and time.

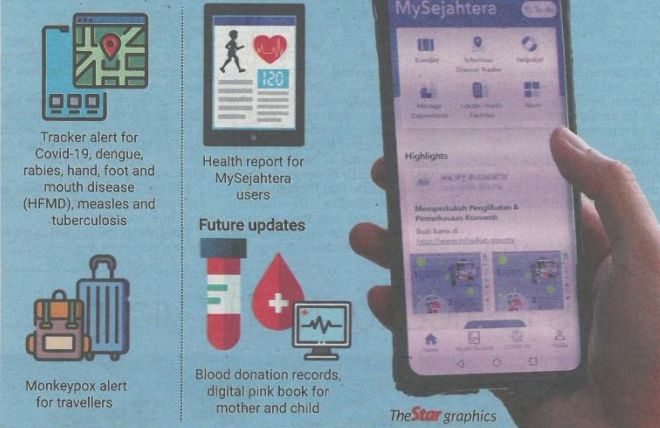
A list of upcoming vaccines yet to be administered was also shown.

MySejahtera users can access the features after updating the app on their mobile phones.

Meanwhile, in IPOH, Khairy said users' data in the MySejahtera app would continue to be secured amid its recent upgrade.

"The app has never been hacked and since we are adding more features, we have done several things to secure it and will continue to do

MySejahtera 2.0 features



Tracker alert for Covid-19, dengue, rabies, hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), measles and tuberculosis

Health report for MySejahtera users

Future updates

Blood donation records, digital pink book for mother and child

Monkeypox alert for travellers

TheStar graphics

so to ensure the safety of the data.

"The ministry is keeping the data, not others," he told reporters after launching the Health National Malaysia Agenda road tour at Meru Raya.

"The information can only be shared if the users give their permission," he added.

Khairy said no data of MySejahtera users were leaked after investigating complaints and

reports of unsolicited one-time password (OTP) text messages and spam email from the Covid-19 app's helpdesk.

Separately, Khairy said more beds would be prepared in hospi-

tals for influenza patients if needed.

"Like during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have prepared beds, so if the influenza cases continue to spike, we can supply more beds."

"Apart from preparing the beds, we will also ensure that there is sufficient stock of medicine in the market so the public need not be admitted into hospitals to recover at home," he added.

On Friday, Khairy said the ministry had agreed to release the federal stockpile to private hospitals and clinics facing medicine shortages such as for flu and fever, and medication for children.

He also advised the public not to overbuy medicines.

Khairy also said that the ministry focuses on getting at least 1.5 million Malaysians aged 40 and above to get a health screening.

"We believe that's the figure of those who have not done any health screening before."

"They will go for screening from July to December," he said, adding that more than 50% of the adult population in the country has never done any health screening.

"The screening is important to prevent and cure any health problems."

"We realised that many might not have the accessibility to go for a health screening, so we will conduct more outreach programmes," he added.

THE STAR, TUESDAY 19 JULY 2022

MACC ready for 'combat'

Enough proof for anti-graft body to nail several individuals

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PUTRAJAYA: Anti-graft investigators are convinced that they have enough evidence to bring about charges against several individuals involved in the multibillion-ringgit Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) scandal.

Those in the know describe the case as "complex", but the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is confident that the charges can be pressed once the on-going investigation has been completed.

Confirming this, Tan Sri Azam Baki said a report had been submitted to the legal department to decide on the next course of action.

"We have completed investigation on some parts of the case and are proposing charges against the suspects," the MACC chief commissioner told *The Star*.

"We are discussing this with our legal team," he said, adding that if they agreed, then the charges would be made.

In the course of the investigation, MACC officers were sent abroad, including to Singapore, to gather evidence.

"We believe some transactions happened in Singapore," said Azam.

"Money was channelled to certain individuals' bank accounts there."



TheStar
EXCLUSIVE

Versatile craft:

The Littoral Combat Ship is a class of small vessel operating close shore similar to the USS Montgomery (front) as seen in this file picture.

— AFP

The MACC is also pursuing criminal breach of trust violation committed by a then high-ranking official of a company that was involved in the LCS.

"We believe a substantial amount of money was transferred out without the approval of the company's board of directors," Azam said, without revealing the total sum involved.

However, he did say that at one point, the official transferred RM24mil without the board's approval.

Azam said the MACC was aware that the public was waiting for the outcome of the LCS investigation.

"There are so many aspects to the investigation. To get to the bottom of things, the probe must be conducted A to Z. We needed time," he said.

According to reports, the over RM9bil LCS project was awarded in 2014 and the order was for six of the ships to be constructed by Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNS).

The ships should have been delivered in April 2019 but so far, none has been built despite the government having paid RM6bil to the company.

In November 2020, BNS' parent company Boustead Heavy Industries Corporation Bhd (BHIC) lodged a report with the MACC on the possibility of irregularities concerning the LCS project.

Several individuals had been arrested in connection with the case, including a former top BHIC official.

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Firm's top officials held over false claims fiasco

PUTRAJAYA: None of those arrested for the PenjanaKerjaya's false claims is from the Human Resources Ministry, but investigators did take statements from several of ministry staff members.

It is learnt that officials from the ministry had been summoned to assist in investigations since the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the Social Security Organisation (Socso) launched a joint operation, codenamed *Ops Hire*, to investigate the case.

"The officers were called to help shed light on several policies and procedural matters as investigators needed clarification on them."

"This is a normal process. If explanation is needed, then investigators will call the necessary people and have their statements recorded," a source told *The Star*.

The source confirmed that arrests made pertaining to the case did not involve ministry staff members, refuting reports that 40 people from the ministry and Socso had been pulled out of their offices in a raid.

"MACC has been calling officials for the past week but certainly not 40 people," said the source.

When asked to comment, Datuk Seri M. Saravanan said he had no information on the matter.

The Human Resources Minister was visibly irritated when met by the media, saying that questions should be forwarded to the MACC instead.

"As of now, I don't have any information on who has been caught. So please ask MACC because I do not have the answer," he added.

In the latest arrest, a chief executive officer and a company director were picked up in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The company director, 41, was remanded for four days until July 21, while the other suspect, a 40-year-old woman, was released after investigators recorded her statement.

According to sources, the suspects are believed to have submitted invoices with false details to Socso for the hiring incentive training programme.

"This was done so that the company can receive payment allocated under the National Economic Recovery Plan amounting to RM700,000 when the programme was not fully implemented," said a source on July 18.

MACC senior director of investigation Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hashim confirmed the arrests.

To date, 42 individuals have been arrested in connection with the probe.

Last week, the MACC and Socso launched the operation to investigate claims that certain employers and training providers had submitted false claims for the PenjanaKerjaya programme.

The programme, introduced in 2020 under the National Economic Recovery Plan, offers financial incentives of between RM600 and RM1,000 to employers for each employee or apprentice employed for up to six months.

Socso has suspended payments totalling RM423mil for the programme following the probe.

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Nation 5

Customs intercepts ivory cache worth RM80mil

PORT KLANG: Six tonnes of raw ivory tusks along with bones and scales of other endangered animals have been seized by the Customs Department from a container here.

The seizure, said to be the largest in the department's history, is estimated to be worth at least RM80mil on the black market.

Customs Department director-general Datuk Zazuli Johan said the ivory was seized together with pangolin scales, rhinoceros horns, tiger teeth and other animal bones and skulls.

On July 10, an enforcement team detected three containers believed to come from Africa.

"The containers were scanned and one of them was found to contain the illegal items," he told reporters at the Selangor Customs Office at North Port yesterday.

When the container doors were opened, it was filled with wood at the front portion to dupe authorities.

"We seized six tonnes of ivory, 29kg of rhinoceros horns, 100kg of pangolin scales, 14kg of assorted animal horns and 300kg of assorted animal bones and skulls, including tiger teeth.

"Based on our investigations, the containers were headed to the Pasir Gudang Port from United Arab Emirates but were intercepted when the ship reached Port Klang," he said, adding that investigations were ongoing to identify the importer and shipping agent.

He said in 2012, the department seized 500kg of ivory worth RM2.4mil while pangolin scales worth RM40mil were seized in 2014.

The case has been classified under Section 135(1)(a) of the Customs Act for attempting to import prohibited items.

Checks revealed that a kilogramme of ivory is worth an estimated RM8,000 on the black market, while rhinoceros horns are worth at least RM288,000.

Tiger parts are worth at least RM10,000 per kg on the black market," Zazuli said.

Those with information can contact the Customs Department's toll-free number at 1-800-88-8855.