

PRIME NEWS

Biggest haul in MACC history

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RM112M SEIZED:
State dept director,
deputy arrested
with 2 others

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A YEAR-LONG probe into two government officers and two others resulted in the seizure of RM112 million by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in its biggest success ever.

The figure may even reach a staggering RM300 million as MACC revealed that the amount of money, in cash and from accounts of the suspects, recovered so far did not include the value of properties and possible deposits made overseas.

Investigations pointed to possible kickbacks received from infrastructure projects worth RM3.3 billion handled by the two officers — the director of a state department and his deputy — since 2010.

He said RM45 million was recovered from the director and RM7.2 million from the deputy.

The money was recovered from an office, a house and safe deposit boxes in banks.

MACC also froze bank accounts belonging to the senior officers and their family members, amounting to RM23 million.

After arresting the senior officers, MACC picked up the deputy director's brother, who is a 55-year-old "Datuk" and a businessman, as well as his 50-year-old accountant.

"The accountant is believed to have helped in managing the money, which was obtained illegally," he said, adding that bank accounts with RM37 million linked to the officers were also frozen.

Other items seized in the operation were nine luxury vehicles, jewellery, luxury watches, 94 designer handbags and 127 land titles.

Azam said MACC believed the senior officers had also kept money in a neighbouring country.

"I cannot reveal which country because it is confidential, but I can assure you that we are going to get it.

"We have carried surveillance on the two since October last year, fol-



The two others are a relative of the deputy and an accountant.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki yesterday said the seizure and arrests followed a special operation dubbed "Op Water" at the homes and offices of the suspects after a one-year surveillance.

"It is the biggest ever in the history of the commission since it was established 49 years ago."

In its mission to curb corruption among civil servants, the commission had launched the operation, which saw the 54-year-old director and his 51-year-old deputy arrested for allegedly abusing their positions in approving projects under the purview of the department by favouring relatives.



One of the suspects in the Sabah graft case being escorted to the court yesterday. Pic by Malai Rosmah Tuah

lowing complaints and tip-offs.

"They were living beyond their means based on their income."

He also said several witnesses had come forward to give their statements, adding that more would be called in to facilitate the probe.

The four men were remanded a week from yesterday by magistrate Stephanie Sherron Abbie to facilitate the MACC investigations.

The four men arrived at court handcuffed and were brought by MACC officers into Stephanie's chambers.

One of them was clad in an orange attire meant for MACC detainees.

The suspects were represented by counsels P.J. Pereira, Datuk Chau Chin Tang, Roland Cheng and Peter Marajin.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki (third from right) showing the items that were seized during Op Water, at the state MACC headquarters in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. With him are MACC special operations chief Datuk Hishamuddin Hashim (third from left) and MACC intelligence director Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahya (second from right). Pix by Mohd Adam Arinin

'15 hours to count all the money'

KOTA KINABALU: Counting RM52 million in cash was no easy task for the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in its biggest seizure ever.

The cash, in stacks of RM50 and RM100 bills recovered from a state department director and his deputy, the main suspects in the case, was counted in an undisclosed location, secured with locks and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras.

The cash was part of the RM112 million recovered so far by MACC, following the arrests of four men, including the deputy's relative and his accountant.

This does not include properties, jewellery and cash that might have been deposited overseas.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said 30 investigators took 15 hours to count the money from noon on Tuesday until 3am yesterday.

They counted the money in a locked room with the CCTV on and



Some of the jewellery seized by MACC.

were told to take off their shirts.

"They were assigned to count all the cash, including foreign currencies, seized during the operation," he said, adding that the foreign currencies included United States, Aus-

tralian and Singapore dollars, Renminbi, Euro and British pounds.

Secured vehicles were used to transport the money, which an investigator said "probably weighed hundreds of kilos".



Plugging loopholes in tendering process

KOTA KINABALU: The state government will study the system and procedures on the tendering and awarding of projects in all departments to prevent abuse of power among officers.

In a statement yesterday, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman said the review would be carried out to identify weaknesses or loopholes that provided opportunities for corruption and abuse of power.

This followed the arrests of four people, including a director and

deputy director of a state government agency, over a corruption case.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission nabbed the two senior officers on Tuesday for allegedly monopolising projects under the purview of their department and awarding them to their relatives.

"The state government will extend its full cooperation to MACC in its



Datuk Seri Musa Aman

probe into the two senior government officers arrested on suspicion of corrupt practices in granting government projects.

"Let the authorities conduct their investigation without fear or favour," Musa said.

He reminded those in the civil service to continue upholding the integrity of their offices when discharging their duties and responsibilities.

Netizens: How did they get so much cash?

KOTA KINABALU: Netizens showed little mercy in their comments on the suspects nabbed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) here.

"Daylight robbery," said Ule Zamir

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MACC arrests in 2016

SECTOR			
Civil Servants	No.	Civilians	No.
Top management	4	Private sector	221
Professional and management	75	Public sector	174
Support staff	247	Politician	2

Recent high-profile MACC arrests involving civil servants



...response to a story posted online by the *New Straits Times*, echoing the sentiments of many.

A question that appeared in the comments posted on Facebook was on the origin of the money.

The stacks of RM52 million in cash, as well as jewellery, designer watches, handbags and luxury vehicles displayed by MACC at a press conference by its deputy chief commissioner (operations), Datuk Azam Baki, proved surreal for many.

"How did they get so much cash?", "Who gave it to them?", "Is that real money?", "That amount would not have been easy to hide" and "You can build a thousand houses with that amount" were just some of the questions and comments that represented people's shock over the revelation.

Another Facebook user, Stanley Rozario, called for MACC to keep up its efforts and "search the land for the people's money".

Similarly, Facebook user Auf Ali commended the commission for its success.

"MACC has been doing a great job arresting high-level officers in government agencies for the past few months.

"They deserve recognition."

There were also comments on the suspects, who were said to have betrayed the trust given to them to serve the people.

"MACC should also bring to book the people who gave them the money and look into the projects that were approved by them since 2010," said Jimmy Marah.

Page 1 pic: The press conference on the seizure of RM112 million by MACC yesterday. (Inset) Some of the luxury vehicles seized by the commission.

The luxury vehicles seized by MACC during Op Water, in Kota Kinabalu yesterday.

June

- **Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng** is arrested by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

August

- Three civil servants, including a 'Datuk' and a 'Datuk Seri', are arrested by MACC, which freezes **RM13 million in their bank accounts, including savings accounts and unit trusts amounting to between RM1 million and RM6 million.**
- In Malacca, a **Public Works Department director, who is a 'Datuk', is arrested** in the investigation into a corruption case.
- In Putrajaya, a **senior officer with Kuala Lumpur City Hall** is arrested to facilitate investigations into allegations of corruption and money laundering.
- In Kota Baru, a **senior officer with Tenaga Nasional Bhd** is investigated for two alleged cases of corruption.

September

- **Seven Bank Rakyat officers** are arrested by MACC for allegedly demanding kickbacks and using falsified documents to enable a civil servant to get a loan.
- A former Sabah Land Development Board managing director is charged **at the Kota Kinabalu magistrate's court for corruption involving RM 8,999,999.30.**

October

- MACC arrests **two senior state department officials and seizes RM52 million in cash** from various places, including their offices and homes, in Sabah. **The bank accounts of the officers, amounting to RM60 million, are frozen. Nine luxury vehicles, 94 high-end handbags, jewellery and luxury watches are also seized.**

