

# 'RING PAID OFFICERS UP TO RM6,000 DAILY'

MACC chief: Bribes were based on size of lorry released without proper checks

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**T**HE vape device smuggling syndicate recently crippled by graft-busters allegedly paid enforcement officers at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport Free Commercial Zone (KLIA FCZ) between RM4,000 and RM6,000 daily to turn a blind eye to their activities.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said investigations revealed that these officers were given bribes based on the size of the lorry they were releasing without conducting proper checks.

"Our intelligence suggests that at least 20 lorries linked to the

syndicate were released from the KLIA FCZ daily.

"They charged RM150 for one-tonne lorries, RM300 for three-tonne lorries, RM500 for five-tonne lorries and RM750 for lorries upwards of five tonnes."

MACC officers have so far made seizures worth nearly RM18 million comprising smuggled vape devices, commercial vehicles, warehouses, branded items, mobile phones, computers and cash.

The syndicate has reportedly been actively smuggling vape devices out of KLIA FCZ since 2023.

Sources revealed that the syndicate mastermind was believed to be one of the civilians apprehended on the first day of the operation, codenamed Op Airways, on Tuesday.

Azam said since the operation was launched, they had seized RM17.9 million worth of cash and other items.

"Intelligence gathered by my

investigators so far suggests that this syndicate has been active since 2023.

"The investigation was initiated a few days ago and further checks are being conducted to identify other suspects involved."



Tan Sri Azam Baki

On Wednesday, it was reported that MACC busted a vape smuggling syndicate suspected of bribing Customs Department officials to overlook their illicit activities.

The syndicate, which had been under surveillance for more than three months, was believed to have smuggled nearly RM8 million worth of vape devices through the KLIA Cargo Complex.

The operation saw six Customs Department officers, eight company directors and two company employees arrested in raids around KLIA and Kuala Lumpur.

The more than 122,000 vape devices were believed to have been smuggled in from China via air freight.



## Customs to review S.O.P. after KLIA arrests

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Customs Department will conduct a review of internal procedures and processes at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport Free Commercial Zone.

This follows the arrests of six Customs officers by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) over allegations of receiving bribes from a syndicate responsible for smuggling vape devices.

Customs Department director-general Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd Zainudin said the department would cooperate with the MACC investigation.

"We have not and will not com-

promise on any form of corrupt practice, misconduct or integrity issue involving our personnel.



Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd Zainudin

"The operation conducted by MACC was the product of strategic collaboration between both agencies."

Anis Rizana said the department's Enforcement Division would conduct an internal review of the processes and procedures at the KLIA FCZ.

"Their focus will be on identifying and solving any issues involving governance and integrity."

Anis Rizana added that they would continue such operations to clean up the department.

### TIED TO SOLAR PROJECT

## Another US\$20m of 1MDB funds recovered, says MACC

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A collective effort between Malaysian and United States agencies has led to the recovery of US\$20 million in 1Malaysia Development Fund (1MDB) funds tied to a solar energy project in Malaysia.

The funds were recovered through a joint effort between the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the US Department of Justice (DOJ).

The recovered funds involve Frank White Jr, a businessman and partner in investment firm DuSable Capital Management LLC.

White voluntarily agreed to surrender the funds to the DOJ after discovering that the money received by DuSable originated from misappropriated 1MDB funds, although he was unaware of the source at the time of receipt.

MACC said the commission, together with the government, remained committed to continuing the recovery of assets linked to

date, a value that does not include the US\$20 million recently recovered through the efforts of MACC and the FBI.

MACC said it was also actively pursuing the recovery of misappropriated assets from Kuwait, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and several other countries in Europe.

"These efforts will be further intensified through strategic cooperation with international partners to ensure that misused assets are returned for the benefit of the nation."

In October last year, it was reported that the government had recovered RM27.17 billion related to 1MDB.

Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh had said the funds deposited into the Asset Recovery Trust Account now amounted to RM3.04 billion.

Yeoh had made the statement on behalf of Deputy Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan while wrapping up the debate on the Auditor General's Report Series 3/2024.

**6** ...RM29.73 billion has been returned to the Treasury to date...

**MALAYSIAN ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION**