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ACA chief: We don't close files on active cases

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Anti-Corruption Agency does not deliberately close or "sweep under the carpet" cases which it has begun investigating, its director-general Datuk Ahmad Zaki Hussin said today.

These include the Perwaja Steel case and reports made against Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

"Since I came here, I have never closed any case which we are investigating," he said.

"I have got no reason to protect anyone. And when it comes to investigations, the ACA is not answerable to anyone," he said, adding that the agency only submitted its findings to the Attorney-General's Chambers.

Ahmad Zaki said if it took 20 years to complete investigations on the Perwaja case, it would still be done.

He assumed the post of ACA director-general in September last year.

Ahmad Zaki was speaking to reporters after officiating the ACA's 32nd anniversary celebrations at its headquarters.

He was commenting on a letter on the Internet which claimed the ACA was not independent and was a puppet of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The letter alleged that Ahmad Zaki personally briefed the Prime Minister on all investigations carried out.

The report also said the ACA had conspired with the Government to ensure former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was convicted.

Ahmad Zaki said although the ACA came under the purview of the Prime Minister's Department, he only discussed policy matters and problems faced by the agency with Dr Mahathir.

Asked why he wished to comment on the report which did not carry a signatory, Ahmad Zaki said this was important as such reports could poison the minds of the people.

Citing an example, he said the report had alleged that Deputy Home Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai and he had met secretly in Bangkok for "an unknown purpose".

The report alleged that Norian and Ahmad Zaki had gone to Bangkok to attend a conference but Ahmad Zaki did not attend it and had in fact returned earlier.

Clarifying, Ahmad Zaki said the three of them had gone to Bangkok upon the invitation of the United Nations to attend the opening of an academy to help train Government officers dealing with corruption in the region.

Azmi, he said, was representing the Home Minister, Norian, the Malaysian police and he (Ahmad Zaki) the ACA.

"We attended the opening of the academy as in future, we will also be able to send our officers there for retraining. It is also to help the ACA build its network with other international agencies," he said, adding that one officer had already been sent for retraining.

Ahmad Zaki said he decided to return home earlier as the conference was being held at another location 300km away from Bangkok. He said after going through the programme of the conference he decided that his officer could instead attend.

"I also had to return to Kuala Lumpur because decisions had to be made on certain policy matters."

He described the ploy by those responsible for posting the letter on the Internet on the so-called secret meeting as "a clever way of exploiting

the situation".

"If we had wanted to hold a secret meeting, why in Bangkok?" he asked.

Ahmad Zaki said as the Bangkok programme was only known to his officers, there was a possibility that someone had leaked the information to the writer/s of the letter.

Briefing reporters earlier, Ahmad Zaki said the ACA started as a unit under the Royal Malaysian Police in October 1967. To ensure it was independent and carried out its investigations more effectively, the Government decided to separate it, leading to the birth of the ACA.

The ACA now has 1,200 employees - 800 officers and 400 support staff.

Ahmad Zaki said the Government had also recently upgraded the status of the Labuan office which previously reported to the Sabah ACA. It would now report directly to the headquarters here.

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