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ACA-Perwaja

PERWAJA STEEL PROBE TAKING TIME DUE TO WIDE SCOPE - ACA

KUALA LUMPUR, May 3 (Bernama) -- The Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) said today its probe into alleged irregularities in Perwaja Steel Bhd is taking time because of the wide scope of the investigation.

"It involves international transactions that come under the jurisdiction of not just Malaysia but also others," said ACA director-general Datuk Ahmad Zaki Husin.

"The investigations are still going on," he told reporters after opening a course for ACA officials at the agency's headquarters.

He was asked why the probe which started in October 1996 was still uncompleted.

The probe was launched following allegations of wrongdoings which resulted in the Terengganu-based steel maker suffering accumulated losses of RM2.9 billion.

Ahmad Zaki said there were new developments in the Perwaja Steel case that necessitated the ACA to widen the scope of investigation.

He declined to say if the the company's former managing director, Tan Sri Eric Chia, was still wanted by the ACA for questioning.

On the claim by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that a crony of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had deposits amounting to RM230 million, Ahmad Zaki said the ACA might carry out investigations if a report was lodged.

"If there's a report, we will consider it. If the report has merits then we will will conduct a probe just like other cases," he added.

In another development, Ahmad Zaki said ACA arrested 300 people under the Anti-Corruption Act 1997 last year compared to 334 people in the previous year.

Those arrested included a state executive councillor and three district councillors.

The ACA chief denied that the agency practised "selective enforcement".

He said the total worth of bribes last year was RM7 million, an increase of RM2 million compared to the previous year.

-- BERNAMA

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