

ACA: States must pay contractors promptly

STAR 2 5 SEP 2001

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MALACCA: The Anti-Corruption Agency has called on all state governments and agencies to reduce red tape and make prompt payments to contractors.

Agency deputy director-general (operations) Datuk Ahmad Said Hamdan said the department had received numerous complaints about late payments caused by bureaucracy.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has also reminded finance officers to cut red tape and make payments to contractors on time," he said after witnessing the launch of ACA's Southern Zone Rakan Muda project, involving school students.

Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali (Rustam) launched the project.

Ahmad Said agreed with Ali that speedy processing of building plans, payments and other government-related approvals would automatically reduce corruption.

He said the economy would also grow if red tape was reduced and

state governments adopted quick approval methods.

"If projects need to be completed on time, developers too need to be paid on time," he said.

He added that the agency had received complaints of this nature from all over the country.

On the ACA's part, Ahmad Said, said his officers would monitor the disbursement of RM500mil in allocations for development projects in parliamentary constituencies.

"We will check for possible abuses or misappropriation of the allocations," he said.

The Rakan Muda project is aimed at creating youths who will grow up to be good citizens who shun corrupt practices.

On the Tabung Haji investigation into the RM9mil losses through fraudulent withdrawals, Ahmad Said said the agency was also monitoring the development

"We are waiting for a report from the Auditor-General to determine if the theft was linked to any form of corruption within the organisation," he said.