

04/10/2003

MPs' mileage claims: Government will be impartial, says PM

Hamidah Atan; Jalina Joheng; Abdul Razak Ahmad; Sharanjit Singh LANGKAWI, Fri. - The Government will be impartial in the Anti-Corruption Agency's investigations into mileage claims exceeding RM10,000 a month made by 14 Members of Parliament.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said anyone suspected of wrongdoing would be investigated, regardless of who they are.

"That is for certain, if they do something wrong we will investigate. The question of who (is being investigated) does not come up," he said after launching an exhibitors' signing ceremony for the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition, or Lima 05, which will be held in December 2005.

The MPs whose claims exceeded RM10,000 a month are Mohd Apandi Mohamad (Pas-Jeli - in 10 instances), Lubuk Antu Jawah Gerang (BN-Lubok Antu - four), Abdul Rahman Yusof (Keadilan-Kemaman - twice), and Abdul Fatah Harun (Pas-Rantau Panjang), Lau Hoi Chew (BN-Sibu), Women and Family Development Ministry Parliamentary Secretary and Arau MP Datuk Mastika Junaidah Husin, Kong Cho Har (BN-Lumut), Hoo Seong Chang (BN-Kluang), Lim Bee Kau (BN-Padang Serai), Goh Kheng Huat (DAP-Nibong Tebal), Dr James Dawos Mamit (BN-Mambong), Ramli Ibrahim (Keadilan-Kota Baru), Abu Bakar Othman (Pas-Jerlun) and Mohd Nasir Che Daud (Pas-Kuala Krai) - all once.

The agency's officials have taken copies of the claims submitted by the 14.

In Kuala Lumpur, the ACA said it would seek the assistance of the Election Commission to determine areas which come under the jurisdiction of the MPs.

Its director of investigations Datuk Nordin Ismail said the case was being investigated under Section 11c of the Corruption Prevention Act 1997.

In Bahau, Negri Sembilan, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said the ACA should investigate the matter without fear or favour.

"The amount involved may be immaterial but if an MP claimed that he went for a meeting on such a date when in fact he did not go, that is cheating. The law, in this case, must take its course."

He added that claims made by MPs serving the constituencies in Sabah and Sarawak would naturally be higher than their counterparts in the peninsula because of the air fares incurred.