

Penang MACC closes case on alleged money politics

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By Susan Loone

The Penang Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has closed its investigations into the seven reports on alleged vote-buying in the just-concluded general election lodged by Pakatan Rakyat candidates.

NONEState MACC director Samarajoo Manikam (right) said the witnesses questioned by the commission "did not disclose an offence" under the MACC Act 2009.

However, the results of the probe had been submitted to the Attorney-General's Office last Monday and the case was recommended to be closed, he added.

"They (witnesses) could not tell us who gave them the vouchers, or what they were getting the vouchers for," he told reporters after attending a dialogue session with state government heads in Penang today.

"We found that some who allegedly gave out the vouchers were unidentified foreigners, and the venues where they went to collect the money were makeshift," he said.

"By the time we went to the venues, they were no longer there," he added.

Samarajoo said those who received the vouchers said they were not told to vote for anyone or any particular candidate.

NONEHe was referring to reports lodged by PKR's Abdul Halim Hussain (Teluk Bahang, right), Mohd Tuah Ismail (Pulau Betong), Norhayati Jaafar (Teluk Air Tawar), Ahmad Zakiyuddin Abd Rahman (Pinang Tunggal) and Muhammad Bakhtiar Wan Chik (Balik Pulau parliamentary seat).

PAS' Asnah Hashim (Bayan Lepas) and Rosidi Hussain (Penaga) also lodged similar reports.

Most of the candidates lost their seats by fewer than 1,000 votes.

Abdul Halim and Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin lodged the report after discovering that people lined up at unlabelled shoplots within their constituency to apparently collect "cash vouchers" which were given to them during the May 5 polls.

Meanwhile, Samarajoo denied that MACC officers had told Pakatan politicians not to lodge reports on money politics as they have already won their seats and formed the state government.

"Rest assured none of our officers would say this or appropriate action would be taken," he said.

"We have CCTV recordings to prove they did not say this. We will not stop anyone from lodging reports, it is their right to do so," he added.

He was asked to refer to a comment from Deputy Chief Minister I Rashid Hasnon, who earlier said the Pakatan representatives had been told there was no need to lodge reports as they had won their seats.

239 reports lodged with commission

On a related matter, Samarajoo said that as of yesterday, 239 reports on various allegations have been lodged with the commission.

Out of the figure, 50.2 percent or 120 cases have been pursued, he added.

"The balance of 49.8 percent or 119 cases were either deferred to other various agencies or categorised as no further action," he said.

"Out of the ones pursued, 16 people have been arrested, where nine are public servants while seven are from the private sector," he added.

"And out of those arrested, 11 were brought to court, while it takes only two to three weeks to investigate the cases," he further said.

The half-day session also included a talk on 'MACC free and Independent' by UKM's Institute of Ethnic Studies principle fellow Anis Yusal Yusoff, where politicians were also invited to attend.

When asked why only four political representatives attended today's session, Samarajoo said, "Perhaps they have other programmes".

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