

DAP files graft report against Finance Ministry
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A member of Sarawak DAP filed a report with the Malaysian Anti-corruption Commission (MACC) in Kuching today on secret conversions of open tender processes into selected tender processes by the Finance Ministry.

These acts of corruption, which the party claimed in its report occurred in the tender processes of three projects called by the ministry, could lead to abuse of power, corruption and cronyism.

The reports involved two in connection with the construction of Package B of Jalan Kapit-Song, and Package C of the same road, worth RM100 million each, and the proposed Kanowit Bridge, which is worth RM150 million.

Speaking to the media outside the MACC headquarters in Kuching, Sarawak DAP chief Chong Chieng Jen said a member of his party had lodged a report with the MACC on the secret conversion of the tender processes for the three projects.

“Initially the projects were advertised for open tender process, but later, the Finance Ministry secretly converted the open tender process into selected tender process.

“For the open tender process, anyone can submit their application, but for the selected tender process, only a few names nominated by the ministry are eligible to tender.

“There is room for corruption, abuse of power and cronyism under the selected tender system,” said Chong, who is the MP for Bandar Kuching and assemblyperson for Kota Sentosa.

'Suddenly and secretly changed'

He added: “The most suspicious thing in this case is that the whole thing was already announced and advertised in the media.

“And, despite the fact that 50 applications have been received for both the road projects, the Finance Ministry suddenly and secretly changed it (the open tender process) into selected tender process.

“Given the lack of transparency in the way this was done, a member of Sarawak DAP has decided to lodge a report with the MACC against the Finance Ministry.

“I hope the MACC will investigate the matter thoroughly without fear or favour.”

Chong went on to add that he had raised the issue with the ministry, twice, and the official reason it gave in Parliament was that it wanted to urgently implement the projects.

Under the open tender process, the closing dates for the three projects were supposed to be called in March and April this year.

“But because of the secret conversion to selected tenders, the projects have not commenced until now. Had the ministry proceeded with the open tenders, I am sure the projects would have started by now,” Chong said.

Meanwhile, it is understood that 10 invited companies have been earmarked for the road projects in Kapit.

Six of them are said to be owned by a relative of a minister in Sarawak.

As for the Kanowit Bridge, three of the 10 invited contractors are either newly formed companies or have a paid-up capital of RM500,000 to carry out a project worth RM150 million.

“This is most ridiculous as the backgrounds of the companies are questionable,” Chong said, adding, “I think this is a very serious issue and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, who is also the finance minister, has lot to answer on these matters.”