

## **MACC: Remand for RM100m graft mastermind to be extended**

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The remand period for the mastermind of the syndicate responsible for misappropriation of government fund of over RM100 million at the Youth and Sports Ministry, which will end on Thursday, will probably be extended to facilitate further investigations.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) investigation division director Azam Baki said intensive investigations were being done into the case and it would also see several other members of the syndicate to be held longer.

"The MACC is in the midst of completing the investigation and if we are not satisfied with the information given (by the suspects), we will ask the court to extend the remand period," he told Bernama.

He said in line with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's call for immediate investigation regarding the case, the MACC had also called a number of witnesses from the ministry, National Sports Council (NSC) and the public to record their statements.

However, no new arrest or seizure was made, he said.

Azam said statements from the witnesses were needed to determine the system and procedures used by the divisions or agencies involved, which had led to the leakage and misappropriation of fund, while the investigation into corruption would look into supply and financial aspects.

On reports questioning why only ministry officers were detained when there was an allegation that the case also involved the NSC officials, he said it was too early to determine that the NSC was involved.

"This is because the investigation had so far revealed that the NSC was involved only in making payments to 14 companies as instructed by the ministry officers.

"Our investigations will be done from all angles... let us finish this first, don't jump into conclusion and simply say that the NSC is involved in this scandal," he said.

On the amount of fund and types of sporting events alleged to be the subjects of the misappropriation, Azam said the amount was "too many" and the events were neither exist nor organised.

Meanwhile, Azam commended the move taken by Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin in urging chief secretary to the government Ali Hamsa to set up an independent team to investigate the case to ensure transparency.

Following this, Ali announced that the auditor-general would carry out an independent forensic audit on the ministry and its related agencies to identify weaknesses in their financial procedures and systems.

Last Friday, the MACC detained nine individuals, including ministry division secretary, on alleged involvement in the misappropriation of government funds totalling RM107 million.

The 56-year-old senior officer, who had served in the post since 2008, was allegedly found to have received kickbacks in the form of cash and facilities such as two houses, 12 luxury cars, 40 branded handbags, paid insurance, credit cards and unit trust shares worth millions.

- Bernama

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