

**M'sian quizzed over RM11 mil Australian kickbacks**  
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The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is reported to have interrogated a businessman over RM11.3 million in commissions he allegedly received from two Australian companies to secure Malaysian government contracts to print banknotes.

According to Melbourne's The Age newspaper, the Australian authorities have requested MACC's help in its investigation into the RM134 million (A\$47.5 million) in commissions paid by banknote firms Security and Note Printing Australia - both subsidiaries of Australia's central bank, Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA).- over a six-year period.

"Intelligence from the interviews has been sent to the Australian Federal Police taskforce investigating whether executives of the two RBA subsidiaries breached anti-bribery laws due to their knowledge of payments made to foreign officials to help win banknote supply and printing contracts," said the report.

"The (Malaysia) middleman was paid the money to help the RBA firms win currency supply and printing contracts from Malaysia's central bank...".

Under Australian law, it is a criminal offence for companies or individuals to pay foreign officials to obtain a business advantage. The offence carries a maximum 10-year jail term and hefty fines.

The unnamed Malaysian businessman claimed to have high-level connections in Umno and it is believed that at least one individual closely connected with a senior government official received kickbacks from the commissions paid by the RBA firms.

The Age also said that the businessman had additionally acted as a broker for a Pakistani government weapons-making factory.

NONEThe on-going investigations could result in Australia's first prosecution of an overseas official under its Commonwealth Criminal Code for bribery.

Australian police commissioner Tony Negus (right) has recently met a senior official from MACC to discuss the investigation.

MACC senior deputy commissioner Han Chee Rull had pledged earlier this year that the commission would assist the Australian police.

"If the Australian police should provide us with information that certain Malaysians are involved in corruption offences in Australia, the MACC can conduct an investigation, even though the offence has taken place in Australia," he said.

"If the Australian authorities make a request to the Malaysian authorities to gather evidence or to assist in forfeiture of property, seizure of property in Malaysia, we can also assist."

Secretive offshore tax havens

The Australian probe, which was sparked by an investigative report by The Age, is not confined to alleged commissions paid to Malaysians.

Officials in other countries including Nigeria and Vietnam were said to have received millions of dollars after the Australian companies were awarded banknote supply contracts in these countries.

The payments were often made into secretive offshore tax havens such as the Seychelles and Switzerland, said The Age.

Last year, the police raided the houses of Securrency's managing director Myles Curtis and company secretary John Ellery - both of whom quit the company in March. They deny the allegations.

This is not the first time that Malaysians have been involved in allegations of commissions being paid by foreign companies to secure government contracts.

French investigators are currently probing allegations of RM575 million in commission to Abdul Razak Baginda - a close confidante of Prime Minister Najib Razak - as part of the procurement of the RM4.85 billion Scorpene submarines.

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