

8 under probe for not reporting bribe attempts

NST - 6/12/2006

■ **By Farrah Naz Karim**
farrah@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: They turned down tempting bribe offers, yet are now in the soup.

Eight civil servants are being investigated by the Anti-Corruption Agency for offences under the Anti-Corruption Act 1997.

If found guilty they could face a maximum fine of RM100,000 or a 10-year jail term, or both.

Their offence? Failure to report attempted gratification.

ACA investigations director Shukri Abdul said, as clearly written in the law, the men as officers of public bodies should have reported the attempts to bribe them at the earliest opportunity to either the police or the ACA.

The eight men did not do this, he said.

He said last year, after the opening of investigation papers on 1,441 individuals for corruption, 485 civil servants were arrested for attempted bribery.

Of the 1,441, 106 were members of the public who tried to get their way with government servants by "under-the-table" pay-offs.

If only all civil servants choose to report bribery attempts and not opt to pocket them, the civil service would be free of the problem of corruption.

*ACA investigations director
Shukri Abdul*

The remaining number were civil servants suspected of corruption.

Until September this year, 399 government servants had been arrested for offences after the opening of investigation files on 1,079 people.

After investigating 110 cases of corruption among the public, 65 clients of the government were arrested for trying to "buy" civil

servants.

Under the law, anyone who offers a government officer for, among others, to abstain from performing his duties or aiding in procurement, shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment of between 14 days and 20 years, and a fine of not less than five times the value of the gratification or RM10,000, whichever is higher.

For failure to report attempts at solicitation, members of the public could face a fine not exceeding RM10,000 or a maximum jail term of two years, or both.

"In most cases, civil servants who lodge reports against members of the public they dealt with are those involved in law enforcement," he said.

He added that cases included traffic policemen getting "offers" in return for letting traffic offenders go free.

Shukri said although the number of civil servants co-operating with the ACA by reporting attempts at bribery by the public had been encouraging, it was low in comparison to their counterparts who were happy to accept the offers.

"Look at our records for 2005. Of the 485 cases, only 106 cases of bribes offered were reported.

"An estimated 80 per cent cases were civil servants accepting bribes.

"If only all civil servants choose to report bribery attempts and not opt to pocket them, the civil service would be free of the problem of corruption," he told the *New Straits Times*.