

DATE: 14/1/2010

Those leaking info face action, vows MACC chief

• By Farrah Naz Karim
farrah@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Anyone who divulges information on ongoing Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission investigations will face the full brunt of the law.

This warning came from MACC Chief Commissioner Datuk Abu Kassim Mohamed who said this had to stop as secrecy and the element of surprise were crucial for investigating officers to conduct probes.

In his first media briefing after assuming his post, Abu Kassim added that the MACC would fully enforce Section 29(4) of the Malaysian-Anti Corruption Commission Act 2009.

The section prohibits anyone from divulging information on a report lodged to the MACC, other than commission officers and the public prosecutor until an accused person is charged in court.

"We have not done this before but we will do this as leaking of information tampers with our investigations.

"If a complainant lodges a report to the MACC and then holds a press conference to tell what it is all about, he gives away details that could hamper our operations.

"When we investigate, we need to call in those involved for statements... but after such exposure, they will know we will be approaching them. (They) will disappear, for instance, and things won't go smoothly for our probes."

To avoid breaches of the act, the warning also applied to the media.



MACC Chief Commissioner Datuk Abu Kassim Mohamed making a point at the press conference yesterday. At left is his deputy, Datuk Mohd Shukri Abdull.

Abu Kassim issued the warning after non-governmental organisation Bersih Bangun Selangor held a press conference outside the MACC headquarters on Monday.

The press conference was held after a report was lodged against Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim in relation to a UiTM campus project.

Abu Kassim said the enforcement of the section would stop allegations of MACC's inefficiency and avoid investigations

being delayed.

Also present were his newly-appointed deputy, Datuk Shukri Abdull, and Deputy Chief Commissioner Zakaria Jaafar Mohamed.

Shukri said MACC received 5,825 reports that had basis for investigations and 937 investigation papers were opened with 500 people arrested last year.

Last year also saw the commission filing 176 corruption charges, with convictions secured for 75 per cent of them.

Shukri said 51 top government and private sector officials, including a vice-chancellor and a secretary-general, were among those taken to court.

Also charged were 11 politicians from Barisan Nasional and three from Pakatan Rakyat.

"In pursuing the war against corruption, we will ensure that our actions are transparent and independent.

"Our promise is no one gets preferential treatment, regardless of their political affiliations."