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'Anwar gave order'

PROBE: Bank CEO in 1999 said ex-DPM had asked him to channel millions into others' accounts

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A BANK chief executive officer had declared to the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) in 1999 that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had instructed him to channel millions of ringgit into the accounts of individuals and companies.

ACA had obtained a confession from the CEO, who was the first suspect questioned by the graft-fighting body investigating alleged

corruption and abuse of power by Anwar, who was deputy prime minister and finance minister until Sept 2, 1998.

Sources said the CEO would have been a star witness, having managed the movement of the funds locally, only for investigators to discover that those instructions were largely verbal and without a paper trail.

Nonetheless, ACA had uncovered breaches of the Companies Act and the Securities Commission Act by companies it was investigating and had recommended that the Securities Commission pursue action.

However, it is not known if this was pursued.

It is learnt that investigators wrapped up the probes in late 2000, after a year of probing.

ACA, which was renamed the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in 2009, had questioned hundreds of suspects and witnesses.

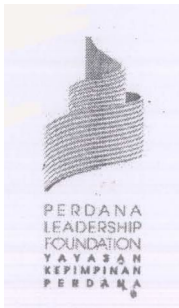
A statutory declaration (SD) by former Bank Negara assistant governor Datuk Abdul Murad Khalid had sparked the probe.

Murad said Anwar had amassed some RM3 billion during his tenure in the administration, adding that the latter's cronies had set up master accounts from which contributions could be made in Anwar's interests.

Sources told the *New Straits Times* yesterday

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EXCLUSIVE



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Origin of RM3b still a mystery

that ACA had, in connection with the case, roped in Bank Negara's investigators and launched investigation papers (IPs), including into one master account related to some RM3 billion, which was opened in the British Virgin Islands.

Investigators had also inspected subsidiary accounts. Four investigating teams opened more IPs on several companies and individuals that ACA believed had money trails that could lead to Anwar.

Sources, in explaining the absence of a paper trail, said undocumented transaction instructions and origin were a major obstacle in the probes. Funds channelled from companies to implicated individuals were justified as donations, which legalised the transaction.

Sources said ACA could not establish the origin of the RM3 billion.

In the 1999 probe, sources said investigations into the case started soon after the SD was made, with investigators tracking funds to SL, a neighbouring country to record his statement. The sources said investigators faced constraints such as lukewarm responses from foreign governments, including those in a neighbouring country.

"In one of the investigations, investigators had traced the illicit channelling of monies for a project, the value of which had been inflated by millions and the extra costs were making their way back. This hit a snag as ACA couldn't get the cooperation (of a neighbouring country)."

The sources also clarified recent media statements that Murad had retracted his SD, saying there were no official records, including with the then ACA, to suggest so.

Former ACA director-general Datuk Ahmad Zaki Husin yesterday said he had supervised investigations into the case, which was based on the SD. However, he said, he could not reveal more as he was bound to the oath he had taken when he assumed office.

Asked if he thought there were grounds to reopen the case, which was reported to have been classified "*kemas untuk simpan*", he said the term used by ACA investigators did not mean "no further action", but meant "keep in view" and, hence, could be revisited any time.

MACC investigations director Datuk Mustafar Ali said MACC did not reopen cases once they were closed by deputy public prosecutors.

"This is unless new and significant evidence is introduced or raised."

Calls to Anwar's media coordinator, Eekmal Ahmad, for comments were not answered.