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# 'DON'T TAKE WHAT BELONGS TO PEOPLE'

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## Najib warns public servants to stay away from corruption

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**T**HE recent arrests by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) should serve as a reminder to government servants to stay away from corruption.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said those in the public sector should protect the people's rights by not being involved in graft.

"We must never take what belongs to the people. Whatever (budget) we have allocated are for the people.

"Any leakages will result in the people being disappointed with the government and losing their confidence in us (the public sector)," he said at the monthly gathering of the Prime Minister's Department here yesterday.

MACC had detained the Rural and Regional Development Ministry's secretary-general Datuk Mohd Arif Ab Rahman and his two sons last week for alleged corruption and abuse of power.

The graft busters seized millions in cash and kind, including gold bars, designer handbags, branded watch-

es and foreign currencies.

In **Shah Alam** yesterday, a former chief executive officer of Tekun Nasional Datuk Abdul Rahim Hassan pleaded not guilty at the Sessions Court to soliciting and receiving RM36,000 bribe two years ago.

It was reported that the detained secretary-general, who is currently being remanded until Jan 11, had served as a board member of Tekun Nasional.

The MACC is investigating if the two are connected to the corruption case involving the Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

Among other high-profile graft cases that hogged the media spotlight were ex-Sabah Water Department director Awang Mohd Tahir, who has been slapped with 37 money laundering charges totalling RM61.48 million, and Youth and Sports Ministry official Othman Arshad who has been charged with 32 counts of misappropriating funds totalling RM38 million and fraud.

In an interview with MACCFM recently, MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Azam Baki said the commission would step up enforcement in the public sector, government-linked companies and financial institutions.

He said more focus would be given on those in the procurement divisions and enforcement agencies because the tendency for corruption there was quite high.

Azam said among the factors that could raise a red flag were when the public servants lived luxuriously, played golf and had girlfriends or mistresses.

In **Bagan Datuk**, Perak, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said yesterday MACC would leave no stone unturned in its fight against graft.

He said the commission would not only go after the 'small fry' but also 'big fish'.

"The commission's move to detain those in top positions was because they were allegedly involved in white-collar crime. This action is not seasonal.

"The efforts will continue without any compromise as they are important for the good image of the country.

"The arrests by the MACC are measures that translate the government's commitment, especially with the MACC new leadership.

"The country's index on corrupt practices is rather high on the lists issued by several international bodies," he said.

Zahid had earlier attended the proclamation ceremony of Bagan Datuk as the 12th administrative district of Perak by Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

Zahid, who is also home minister, said he had confidence in MACC, which was led by Chief Commissioner Datuk Dzulkipli Ahmad and his deputies.