

# MACC to probe RM214m fibre-optic contract linked to Dr M

LATIFAH ARIFIN  
AND ILAH HAFIZ AZIZ  
SERDANG  
news@nst.com.my

**T**HE Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will investigate the awarding of a RM214.2 million fibre-optic contract to a company linked to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said more information needed to be gathered.

"So far, I have no information on the matter, but if there is any information and a complaint that there was any corruption, then this will become the basis for an investigation.

"We will not hesitate to investigate, but we need more information," he said at the opening of the tri-annual general meeting of

Malaysian Corruption Watch here yesterday.

In his statement of defence in the suit filed against him by Dr Mahathir, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had cited several decisions made by Dr Mahathir to justify why the RM150 million defamation suit against him should be thrown out.

Anwar claimed that Telekom Malaysia Bhd had issued a letter to request permission to hold direct negotiations with Opcom Sdn Bhd (Opcom) for the supply of fibre-optic cables worth RM214.2 million.

The letter was issued to the Finance Ministry on Sept 15, 2003, when Dr Mahathir was the prime minister and finance minister. His third son, Datuk Seri Mukhriz, was the director of Opcom.

Anwar said Telekom was a government-linked company in which the Minister of Finance In-

corporated (MoF Inc) held a special share, which gave MoF Inc the power to overrule the decisions of the board and other shareholders.

He said MoF Inc was then under the purview of Dr Mahathir.

On a separate matter, Azam said there was no interference by politicians or the government since the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency, now known as the MACC.

He said the late Tan Sri Harun Hashim, who was ACA finance director, had told him he never faced interference when his officers conducted investigations.

"I met Tan Sri Harun in 1997 and he said graft-busting could be possible only if there was political will. In 1967 (when the ACA was set up), he told me that politicians never interfered in their work. The government never disturbed them.

"(Deputy prime minister) Tun



MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki (left) presenting the Anti-Corruption Ambassador for People with Disabilities award to Dr Billy Tan Chee Seng at the opening of the tri-annual general meeting of Malaysian Corruption Watch in Serdang yesterday, PIC BY HAZREEN MOHAMAD

Dr Ismail (Abdul Rahman) established the ACA and he was an exemplary leader for not allowing the government to interfere in the fight against graft. So, during the extension of my contract (as MACC chief commissioner), my hope is for (politicians) to (remain out of any probes). This must become a reality."

On another matter, he clarified that a suspect in a money-laundering case related to illegal mining died at a hospital and not in a MACC building.

He said the allegations that the

man died in a MACC lockup were not accurate.

"It should be clarified that he died at a hospital. He was one of our suspects. When he looked sick during the day, we took him to the hospital and he died there.

"The allegations (that he died in an MACC lockup) need to be corrected. I will hand the matter over to the police for investigation."

On whether an internal investigation would be carried out by the MACC, he said the probe would be carried out by the police first.