

PM: I WON'T MEDDLE IN GRAFT PROBES

MACC has a right to probe into Nafas, Khazanah cases, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he will neither block nor interfere in the investigation into the National Farmers' Organisation (Nafas) by the authorities, including the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

He yesterday said the authorities had the right to conduct a fair investigation into anyone, regardless of rank and position, or if it involved any government or private company.

"This will be done without exception. If there is a case, MACC will make a move.

"If it's a criminal case, police will go in. It doesn't matter what department or rank, government-linked companies or private.

"Now, there is an uproar over Nafas. Although it is an independent body, it is under the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry," he said.

He mentioned MACC's investigation into Khazanah Nasional Bhd, whose chairman is the prime minister.

In a recent report, MACC had said that it was launching a probe into the RM43.9 million investment loss incurred by Khazanah and Permodalan Nasional Bhd in FashionValet.

"The issue now being discussed about Khazanah is an old case.

"However, I will not hinder the investigation if there is a report. If there's wrongdoing, investigate. If there's wrongdoing, prosecute. If there's wrongdoing, punish."

He said this after officiating at the National-Level Hawkers and Petty Traders Day Carnival at the Picca Convention Centre in Butterworth Arena, Penang.

Speaking about the Nafas case, Anwar said he was leaving it to MACC to conduct an investigation into the farmers' organisation and other entities involved.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim officiating at the National-Level Hawkers and Petty Traders Day Carnival at the Picca Convention Centre in Butterworth Arena, Penang, yesterday. With him is Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development Minister Datuk Ewon Benedick (right). NSTP PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

"I have long been annoyed by cartels, which take care of their own groups, not the people."

On Tuesday, MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki confirmed that it was investigating allegations of cartel involvement in the distribution and supply of padi fertiliser contracts in Nafas, which is under the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry, with a value of RM1.8 billion.

It is learnt that Nafas was responsible for procuring padi fertiliser and distributing it to farmers through its state-level offices.

MACC launched its investigation after conducting raids in Kuala Lumpur, including on Nafas headquarters, the ministry's offices and nine companies awarded projects.

It is understood that MACC's suspicions were raised after learning that a company was awarded a contract despite being inactive for eight years.

It is understood that Nafas claimed that the contract with the company had to be rushed through because it was an "emergency purchase".

According to sources, the project under the ministry was awarded to Nafas for a period of 30 months from 2021 to last year.

MACC had since arrested a number of people, including the

main suspect, a manager in the promotions and marketing division of Nafas.

The chairman of a foreign company was also detained.

On Friday, the Farmers' Organisation Authority had suspended Nafas' constitution.

The suspension order was issued by the authority's director-general Amir Matamin, who was acting as the registrar of farmers' organisations under Section 20(1) of the Farmers' Organisations Act 1973 (Act 109).

Amir said disharmony in Nafas arose when its board of directors disregarded decisions made by the registrar and had acted independently by issuing media statements before consulting with the registrar.

He said during the suspension period, the board of directors and management of Nafas would not have any authority as provided under the organisation's constitution.

The registrar said it would appoint an administrator and set up committees to oversee governance at Nafas and conduct investigations into its former management, governance and financial records.

The suspension took effect on Friday and will remain in place until further notice.