

ALLEGED CORRUPTION

'6 Sabah reps not charged as claims were based on hearsay'

KUALA LUMPUR: Six Sabah assemblymen were not charged with corruption over the issuance of mineral prospecting licences because the claims against them were based on hearsay, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

Speaking during Prime Minister's Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat, he said this was why the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) only charged two assemblymen, Datuk Andi Muhammad Suryady Bandy (Tanjung Batu) and Datuk Dr Yusof @ Josree Yacob (Sindumin).

"Eight assemblymen were linked to the video, but according to the MACC, a case must be strong enough before it can be prosecuted. They said only cases that are substantive in facts and

law will be referred to the prosecution. If it is not substantive and relies only on a video, it cannot proceed."

He said from his own experience, recordings and videos alone were not sufficient without supporting facts and legal grounds.

According to the MACC, there was sufficient evidence to charge two assemblymen, while claims against the others were hearsay based on voices in the video.

Anwar was responding to a question by Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee (PN-Beluran).

On June 30, two assemblymen pleaded not guilty to corruption charges related to the licences.

Authorities began their probe after edited videos were published by an online news portal last November.