

Dirty money - in washing machine

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MACC recovers RM100,000 believed to be bribes hidden by land officer

KUANTAN: Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officers have recovered up to RM100,000, believed to be "dirty money", hidden in a washing machine of a Pahang Land and Mines officer.

The money was found during a raid at the officer's home on Wednesday night.

He and three other Pahang Land and Mines Department officers, all aged between 30 and 38, have been arrested on suspicion of receiving bribes to allow illegal bauxite mining in the state.

MACC investigations director Datuk Azam Baki said one of the four men was a senior officer in the

Pahang Land and Mines department.

"Their *modus operandi* is to sell the 13D form, which actually costs RM1 per copy, for between RM150 and RM200 each to illegal bauxite miners.

"Only those who have mining licences can buy the form, which is needed to transport bauxite ore from mining sites to stockpiling areas.

"With the forms, the illegal miners are automatically accorded protection from enforcement agencies," Azam told a press conference here yesterday.

He added that MACC had to date detected more than 200 illegal

bauxite miners operating in the state.

The Federal Government announced on Wednesday a three-month moratorium from Jan 15 on bauxite mining in Pahang and outlined measures the industry must implement during the period to stop pollution caused by the activity.

Azam also said that the state government and the people of Pahang had lost out in royalty payments from bauxite mining.

"There should be more than RM47mil in royalty collected from bauxite mining last year, but I do not want to give an exact figure until we receive clearer informa-

tion on this matter.

"It is estimated that the state should receive about five times what it received last year from bauxite mining.

"Weaknesses in enforcement caused this to happen," he said, adding that investigations into claims of corruption in bauxite mining had been going on for the past two and a half months.

In a related development, the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry announced the setting up of an integrated enforcement unit to regulate the transportation of bauxite from now until Jan 15.

In a statement, the ministry said it expected bauxite miners to rush

to transport their ore stockpile to the port during this period, and wanted to make sure that they adhered to the law and did not inconvenience the people.

The enforcement unit would be headed by the state Land and Mines Office and include officers from the state Mineral and Geoscience Department, the police, the Road Transport Department, the Land Public Transport Commission, the Kuantan Municipal Council and the People's Volunteer Corps.

Watch the video
thestartv.com

