

LORRY DRIVER PROTECTION RACKET

RTD OFFICERS AMONG 44 HELD BY MACC

Op in 5 states sees 32 RTD staff hauled up for taking bribes of between RM150 and RM3,000 a month

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THE Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) detained 44 individuals, including 32 Road Transport Department (RTD) officers, believed to be connected to a lorry driver protection racket, during a major operation in five states on Monday.

Also detained was a traffic police officer, a former traffic police officer and 10 civilians.

In Kedah, 11 were arrested including eight RTD officers, a traffic police officer, a former traffic



Datuk Seri Azam Baki

officer and a civilian.

In Penang, nine RTD officers were nabbed while in Perak, eight RTD officers and a civilian were detained.

In Perlis, one civilian was arrested while in Melaka, seven RTD officers and four civilians

were detained.

The RTD officers were believed to be from various ranks including senior officers, with the civilians acting as proxies.

Sources said the RTD officers had been giving protection to errant lorry drivers carrying loads beyond their weight limit, as well as those failing to meet technical safety aspects.

“The (suspected) RTD officers would not take action against errant lorry drivers after receiving bribes which were transferred directly into their bank account or that of their proxies every month.

“They (suspects) received between RM150 and RM3,000 a month, with the total amount of bribe money at RM1.64 million.

“The lorry driver protection racket is believed to have taken place between 2019 and last year,” the source said.

MACC Chief Commissioner Datuk Seri Azam Baki, when contacted, confirmed the arrests in the operation codenamed Op Sukat.

He said the operation was carried out with cooperation between the MACC and the RTD, particularly the director-general and the RTD Integrity Department.

“For now, investigations are ongoing and we are looking to make several more arrests as they progress.

“This aspect (bribery) is highlighted in Sections 16 and 17 of the MACC Act 2009.

“We will try our best to expedite the probe into the matter,” he added.

Yesterday morning, three RTD officers were brought to the magistrate’s court in Penang to be remanded.

The four-day remand order against the three was granted by assistant registrar Muhammad Azam Md Eusoff.

The three were brought to the court building at 10.30am.

Lorry driver protection rackets

are not new, with the most recent case being reported in 2019.

In April 2019, 75 Penang RTD enforcement officers, ranked between Grade 19 and 32, were believed to have received monthly kickbacks of between RM10,000 and RM32,000 as inducement for not taking action against errant lorry drivers as well as leaking

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information about RTD operations.

The lorries were supplied with special stickers prepared by *tontos* (thugs), allowing them to be exempted from enforcement actions.

In a blitz from April 9 to April 22,

60 state RTD enforcement officers were arrested and have since been prosecuted in courts.

Out of 457 RTD staff in Penang then, 139 were enforcement officers.

At that time, there were about 8,000 RTD personnel nationwide.