

Attempt to offer bribe to raiding team 'thwarted'

KUALA LUMPUR: City Hall and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) conducted joint operations to uncover foreign-owned "Ali Baba" businesses yesterday.

Thirty officers from the agencies conducted inspections in Jalan Imbi and Bukit Bintang.

During these checks, one premises caretaker offered to "treat" City Hall enforcement officers if they turned a blind eye to the operations.

The caretaker, however, stopped when he realised he was being watched by reporters shadowing the raid party.

"There was an attempt (to offer a bribe), but if you all (media members) had not here, (it might have been) done," said City Hall enforcement director Mohd Muzammer Jamaluddin.

When asked about instances where enforcement officers were approached or bribes were of-



Mohd Muzammer Jamaluddin

ferred, he said the response should come from MACC.

However, he said, City Hall would never compromise with any external or internal parties, especially its enforcement officers, involved in corruption related to abuse of power or misconduct.

Muzammer said during the operation, 20 businesses were inspected and 14 compound no-

tices were issued to premises owners and licence-holders.

They were fined for employing foreigners without valid work permits.

"However, we did uncover cases of permit misuse, including one where a person was married to a Malaysian but operated a business seemingly 100 per cent dominated by foreigners.

"All premises were licensed. Regarding 'Ali Baba' businesses, we cannot confirm the extent of these operations as we're only checking if the licence is valid."

He said City Hall's enforcement department conducted daily patrols and special operations targeting businesses involving foreign nationals, which serve as key performance indicators for the department.

"We have planned 24 operations targeting foreign-run businesses and 24 focusing on foreign hawkers for this year.

"From 2023 to May 2024, we issued 3,588 compound notices and conducted 4,080 confiscation actions against hawkers.

"Also, 343 premises and restaurants were closed."

On a related matter, he said he did not rule out the possibility of foreigners exploiting homeless people or Malaysians to apply for business licences while operating the businesses themselves.

He said there were instances where foreigners had provided housing to homeless people or residents and called them only when there were inspections.

"The caretaker may ask a homeless person to sit next to him. In return, the homeless person gets RM400 to RM500 (per month).

"Or the caretaker may give the homeless person a house (near the shoplots), and when enforcement officers came, the homeless person would be called down."