

'NAME FIRMS INVOLVED'

CALL TO HUNT DOWN MEAT CARTEL MASTERMINDS

PKR, Amanah and several NGO reps lodge reports, urge cops to leave no stone unturned

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PARTI Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah) and several non-governmental organisations yesterday lodged police reports on the activities of a meat cartel, which had imported non-certified meat and passed it off as halal beef in the local market.

Representing the group, Lembah Pantai member of parliament Fahmi Fadzil said police should leave no stone unturned on the issue, which was reported widely by news agencies last year.

"They must investigate the cartel to find the masterminds and drag them to court. The issue has dented the integrity and public

perception towards the country's halal certification," he after lodging a report.

A total of nine reports were lodged at the Pantai police station here.

Fahmi urged the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry to reveal the companies involved in the cartel.

He said the products seized by enforcement teams from the companies involved should also be made public.

"This is so the public can avoid buying it again and those who bought it can dispose of it soonest," he added.

He said those involved in exposing the cartel's operations must be protected under the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010.

The *New Straits Times* had reported that senior officers from no fewer than four government agencies were believed to be working hand-in-glove with a cartel specialising in bringing in non-certified meat into Malaysia and passing it off as halal-certified products.

The officers reportedly received bribes to turn a blind eye to the cartel's operations and ensured that the activities



Lembah Pantai member of parliament Fahmi Fadzil (centre) and representatives of non-governmental organisations showing copies of the reports lodged against the meat cartel at the Pantai police station in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY KHAIRUL AZHAR AHMAD

went undetected.

It is understood that the cartel had been in operation for more than 40 years.

Meanwhile, Amanah has called for a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to be established to investigate the cartel's operations.

Amanah deputy president Datuk Seri Salahuddin Ayub said the ongoing investigations by the police and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) into the matter were not enough.

"Only with an RCI can the responsible parties be called up to testify. Many previous high-pro-

file cases needed an RCI.

"An RCI will uncover the mystery of the cartel's operations and the people behind them.

"We hope the cabinet will decide immediately (on the establishment of an RCI) and submit an application for consent from the Yang-di-Pertuan Agong," he said outside Istana Negara here.

Salahuddin and other Amanah members yesterday handed over a memorandum to Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah through his senior private secretary Colonel (Rtd) Datuk Nazim Mohd Alim.

Salahuddin, the former Agriculture and Agro-based Industry minister, said he was willing to testify in the RCI.

He said Amanah would continue to push for an RCI to be established by writing a letter to the king through the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal.

Asked on the Department of Islamic Development's action plan to manage the scandal, he said it would not suffice.

"During my time, we tried to include personnel, such as the MACC, when visiting abattoirs. But the government fell (before it was implemented)," he added.

NO VALID LICENCE

Director claims trial to accepting RM520,000 in deposits illegally

KUALA LUMPUR: A company director was yesterday charged in three separate Sessions Courts with three counts of accepting a total of RM520,000 in deposits illegally between 2015 and 2017.

Abdul Halim Navaghani, 42, claimed trial to the charges before judges Datuk Ahmad Kamal Arifin Ismail, Datin Sabariah Othman and Hasbullah Adam.

According to the charges, Halim, who runs a travel agency, had

accepted the money from a retired government servant Zainal Abidin Abdul Rasol, 68, without a valid licence through seven CIMB Bank cheques.

He allegedly committed the offences at Al-Safwah Orchid (Asia) Sdn Bhd and Halcent Discovery Holidays Sdn Bhd both at Solaris Mont Kiara, Jalan Solaris here between June 12, 2015, and Jan 10, 2017.

The offence, under Section

137(1) of the Financial Services Act 2013, carries a jail term not exceeding 10 years or a fine of not more than RM50 million, or both.

Deputy public prosecutors Nurul Khairiyah Samsudin and Afiq Nazrin Zaharinan offered RM20,000 bail for all the charges.

In pleading for a minimum bail, counsel Hazeq Fadzli Hasrul Sani, who represented Halim,

said since the Covid-19 pandemic his client's business had suffered a slowdown.

"My client and his wife run a travel agency. Their business was badly affected by the pandemic. He has given full cooperation to the police and he appeared in court willingly today," the lawyer said.

Halim, a father of four, was allowed RM7,000 bail with one surety. He was ordered by the

courts to report to the police station once a month until the disposal of the case.

Earlier, Kamal and Sabariah allowed the prosecution's application to have the case transferred to Hasbullah's court.

Hasbullah allowed the prosecution's application for all the charges against the accused to be jointly tried before him.

The court fixed Feb 5 for men-