

Interestingly, the AEC has used the alleged corruption in the Rubber Plantation Deal as a reason for freezing Dr. Thaksin's assets since 11th June 2007. But until 18th July 2007, they did not finalized the investigation yet and they, at this time, did not decide whether further legal action can be taken!

Manager Daily Newspaper, 18th July 2007 (English Translation)

Headline : AEC to freeze fraud money for the ninth time. SEC submits Shin Corp Info.

Details : Loophole found in Rubber Plantation Deal

On 17th July, Mr. Bunjerd Singkaneti, a member of the AEC, as Chairman of the Sub-Committee investigating the Rubber Plantation Scandal, informed the press of the progress of this case that the Sub-Committee awaits 42 out of 48 of the accused to present their cases. He said that Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra's lawyer has submitted his statement already on 16th July 2007.

He said that the Sub-Committee found loopholes in this case. As the members of the Cabinet always claimed that the screening committee officers in charge already reviewed the matters before submitting the matters for review or approval by cabinet. However, the officers at the screening committee's level also claimed that they just prepared information for decision making by the Cabinet. Further, he found that there were many agendas submitted to the cabinet for review or approval on an urgent basis and as "*other matters to be considered*" while those important matters should have been fixed in advance.

These urgent issues later always turn into trouble. This is something the government should take care of and probably should revise the procedure.

After the meeting of the Sub-Committee, Mr. Bunjerd Singkaneti gave another interview that there was no further progress regarding the investigations relating to the Rubber Plantation scandal.

The Sub-Committee must wait until all the accused submit their statements before taking any further actions. There are 2 groups of people involved: the individuals who are involved directly and those who support the scandal.

The plantation scandal was approved by the Cabinet, so the Sub-Committee needs to investigate further step by step to see who received any benefit from the scandal.

With respect to the ex-deputy PM, Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak who at that time was the chairman of the screening committee in charge of the rubber plantation, requested another 15 days to submit his statement.

Other investigations regarding Dr. Thaksin

Also, Mr. Bunjerd Singkaneti as member of the Sub-Committee to investigate matters of conflict of interest by Dr. Thaksin's government, informed the press that the meeting of the Sub-Committee has not yet been able to conclude details of the investigation relating to the telecommunication business.

The press asked whether the AEC will conduct any investigation regarding the mega projects approved by Dr. Thaksin's cabinet such as IP Star. Mr. Bunjerd said that the Sub-Committee needs to review details of the approval process of each project. Also the Sub-Committee needs to review whether the approval of those projects was influenced by any political power, and whether such approval process has been made in accordance with the laws. Another example raised by Mr. Bunjerd is the case about Air Asia Airline. Since the shareholders of this Air Asia Airline are foreigners, and the airline has been using the airport in Thailand, it needs to be considered whether such shareholding causes any loss of revenue to the airport authority of Thailand.

Regarding EXIM's loan granted to the Myanmar's government, he believes that the AEC can finalize its investigation by the end of September. The Sub-Committee on this matter has been gathering information and has asked for legal interpretation from the Office of Judicial Council. Therefore, it may not be necessary to question the private sector on this matter.