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Impartial body vital in fight against corruption

13 Feb 2007

KUALA LUMPUR: Transparency International Malaysia has proposed that the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) be made an independent body and placed under Parliament.

Its president, Tan Sri Dr Ramon Navaratnam, said that many other nations had already proved that an independent anti-corruption body was the best way to fight graft.

He told the World Ethics and Transparency Forum yesterday that the government should provide more insights into its efforts to combat the scourge, stating that it should adopt the "prosecute and publicise" approach.

He said a six-month survey by his organisation showed that people perceived the corruption level in the country as high.

He said the full results of the survey would be released later this month, and it indicated the public felt the government was not doing enough to curb corruption.

"Despite what the government is trying to achieve, the public is still looking for improvement."

In an immediate response, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said the government was doing all in its power to fight corruption.

He said the government welcomed proposals on how to improve the fight against corruption and those with ideas should submit them to his ministry for consideration.

"We have been pondering what is meant by 'independent'. Until today, we have not received any concrete proposals as to what an independent ACA is," he said.

Nazri, a speaker at the forum, told reporters that the public sometimes perceived the situation wrongly.

"It is not that we do not want to fight corruption. We all want this," he said, adding that the setting up of the Integrity Institute of Malaysia was a step in the right direction.

Nazri added that the government had done a lot to fight corruption but such information was not properly channelled to the public.

The two-day forum organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute and Transparency International Malaysia was attended by 200 participants, including foreign delegates.

Nazri, who is also the Preparatory Committee chairman for the Asean Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Good Governance, admitted that the government needed to do more on the issue.

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