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It's vital to catch the minnows

M.G.D.

I REFER to the report "Nabbing minnows as vital as getting big fish", (NST, June 29). I wholeheartedly agree with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that when corruption is tolerated among the minnows, the big fish feel encouraged, society accepts the practice and corruption becomes part of the culture.

The temptation to succumb to corruption is likely to be more critical with the needy minnows, who only have a lowly paid job to lose if nabbed.

Thus, nabbing the minnows will hopefully send a clear message to the big fish who are still uncorrupted to remain clean as they stand to lose much more if caught, both in terms of remuneration and reputation.

As long as the big fish are untainted, they can act with a clear conscience to clean out the disease of corruption among their subordinates.

But once the big fish themselves are caught in the tentacles of corruption they lose their independence to act against corrupt subordinates, because these people will hold them to ransom by threatening to blow the whistle if exposed.

When it reaches that stage, a culture of corruption has been established, enforced by a mutual fear of exposure. So, a conspiracy of silence reigns for mutual protection and profit. In the process, of course, it is also a prescription for national decay.

M.G.D.

Kuala Lumpur