

Gerakan welcomes latest probe on Zulkipli
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Gerakan has expressed approval over the progress of the police's probe against embattled Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) chief Zulkipli Mat Noor.

Party vice-president Dr S Vijayarajam said it was important that the authorities were perceived to be reactive to such issues.

"This will lessen perceptions of a lackadaisical attitude on the part of the authorities, or worse still, a cover-up," he said in a statement today.

He said swift action to address corruption was imperative in Malaysia's effort to attract foreign investors.

Citing a March 22 article by the The Economist entitled 'Sleaze saps the prime minister's election prospects', Vijayarajam said such perceptions were not complimentary to the anti-corruption efforts in the country.

Negative perception

The article discusses at length of Malaysia's lethargic anti-corruption campaign and prominently mentions the corruption allegations against Zulkipli and Deputy Internal Security Minister Mohd Johari Baharom.

"Mr Badawi has rejected calls to suspend the two officials while the allegations, which both deny, are investigated," read the article.

In response, Vijayarajam said the authorities must remove such negative perceptions regarding graft.

"However much we deny and criticise such foreign reports, it is important to note that businessmen the world over will be reading such magazines.

"To them, it is reliable information. These are the same people we are trying to attract as investors in the Iskandar Development and other regions," he added.

Probe almost done

The police are wrapping up their graft probe on Zulkipli and is expected to reveal their findings soon.

According to Inspector-General of Police Musa Hassan, a special team of 10 senior police personnel initiated investigations early this month and have taken statements from 21 people.

Zulkipli is being probed for corruption, property ownership against his asset declaration and abuse of power.

The allegations were made by former Sabah ACA chief Mohd Ramli Manan and were publicised by Gerak (Movement for Democracy and Anti-Corruption).

According to news reports today, Musa ordered the special team to take statements from Zulkipli on Tuesday.

Statements from Mohd Ramli were taken on March 6 during a 10-hour marathon session.

Zulkipli's contract expires this Sunday. Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to announce whether to extend the contract soon.

Meanwhile, Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang warned that there would be a "firestorm of protest" and if Zulkipli's contract as ACA chief is further extended.

"Zulkipli's credibility and integrity had suffered a big dent when he was conspicuously silent, failing to reiterate his earlier preparedness to appear before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Integrity with regard to the serious corruption allegations made against him," said Lim.

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