

MPs' code of ethics almost ready
Malaysiakini.com
Jun 18, 2007
Bede Hong

A code of ethics for parliamentarians will be finalised next month, ahead of its deadline by more than a year, said the de-facto law minister Nazri Aziz today.

It is expected to be tabled in the next Parliament session, after which the parliamentary rights and privileges committee would implement the new rules for MPs regarding ethical behaviour.

In addition, a permanent committee on ethics and integrity will handle, among others, public complaints against parliamentarians who are found to be in breach of the code. The code will also be enforced on MPs outside of Parliament.

"The committee discussed the code of conduct of parliamentarians, whether inside or outside Parliament. It will establish the responsibilities of parliamentarians," Nazri told a press conference in the Parliament lobby today.

A parliamentary select committee was formed last December to draw up the code of ethics following a customs excise scandal involving Jasin MP Said Yusof early last year.

The scandal also resulted in BN Backbenchers Club chairperson Sharir Abdul Samad resigning after failing to get backing from his colleagues when he supported an opposition motion to refer Said to the parliamentary privileges committee.

The 12-member committee is headed by Barisan Nasional chief whip Najib Abdul Razak and includes Nazri, who serves as deputy, and parliamentary Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang.

Anyone can complaint

In a meeting held this morning, the committee has decided to fast track the formulation of the code, he said. The code was due by end of 2008.

Nazri said the committee has looked into code of ethics of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom and the Parliament of Queensland, Australia for reference. The committee also took example from the national parliaments of Canada and India.

The Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) and the Attorney General's (AG) chambers will assist in formulating the code, said Nazri. The code of ethics will apply only to the Lower House.

One key proposal, said Nazri, is that it would enable members of the public to lodge complaints against MPs.

He also said that the select committee established last December would be dissolved after the code of ethics is tabled. Following this a permanent ethics committee would be formed. The members' list on that committee has yet to be finalised.

The ethics committee is tasked to review existing regulations while privileges committee would serve as a disciplinary body.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/68755>