

ACA reform - again a let-down from PM
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For too long, loud cries have reverberated throughout the country for reforms in the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA), particularly for it to be an independent body and not just an arm of the government. MCPX

When he became prime minister five years ago, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi vowed to stem the tide of corruption in the country. But it is now clear he has failed the nation and people on that score, the March 8 polls results being the most clear indicator.

Today, Abdullah was a let-down again. Questioned on the issue by the media after an early morning function in Kuala Lumpur, he remained non-committal on the agenda for change in the ACA as demanded by the people.

bn mp retreat 190408 abduallah pak lahAll he said was that he would decide on a proposal by the ACA for more independence.

"I have received the proposal and I would decide on it as soon as possible," the prime minister told a press conference after officiating the Barisan Nasional MPs retreat.

The New Straits Times today reported that ACA director-general Ahmad Said Hamdan and his deputy Abu Kassim Mohamad had submitted the proposal to Abdullah two days ago.

According to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Abdul Aziz, the agency had proposed for ACA to operate in ways similar to the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

The ICAC is one of the most esteemed anti-corruption watchdog in the region and is often touted by civil society groups and opposition parties as a suitable model for ACA, which currently reports to the Prime Minister's Department.

Overdue election pledge

In a statement today, Gerakan acting president Dr Koh Tsu Koon welcomed ACA's move to become more independent.

gerakan koh tsu koon pc 041007 query "It will be a concrete mechanism in realising the objectives of the National Integrity Plan launched by the premier in 2004. It will also give greater confidence to the ordinary people when they want to report on corruption cases," he said.

Koh added that an independent ACA would "show the seriousness" of the Barisan Nasional government's pledges in their 2004 and 2008 election statements.

Koh said Gerakan had long lobbied for an independent ACA and would support all measures to combat corruption including strengthening the ACA as an independent body.

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