

Malaysia ninth on list

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62 nations surveyed in Transparency International's report

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KUALA LUMPUR: Transparency International's 2007 Global Corruption Report: Corruption in Judicial Systems shows Malaysia coming out ninth from 62 countries surveyed.

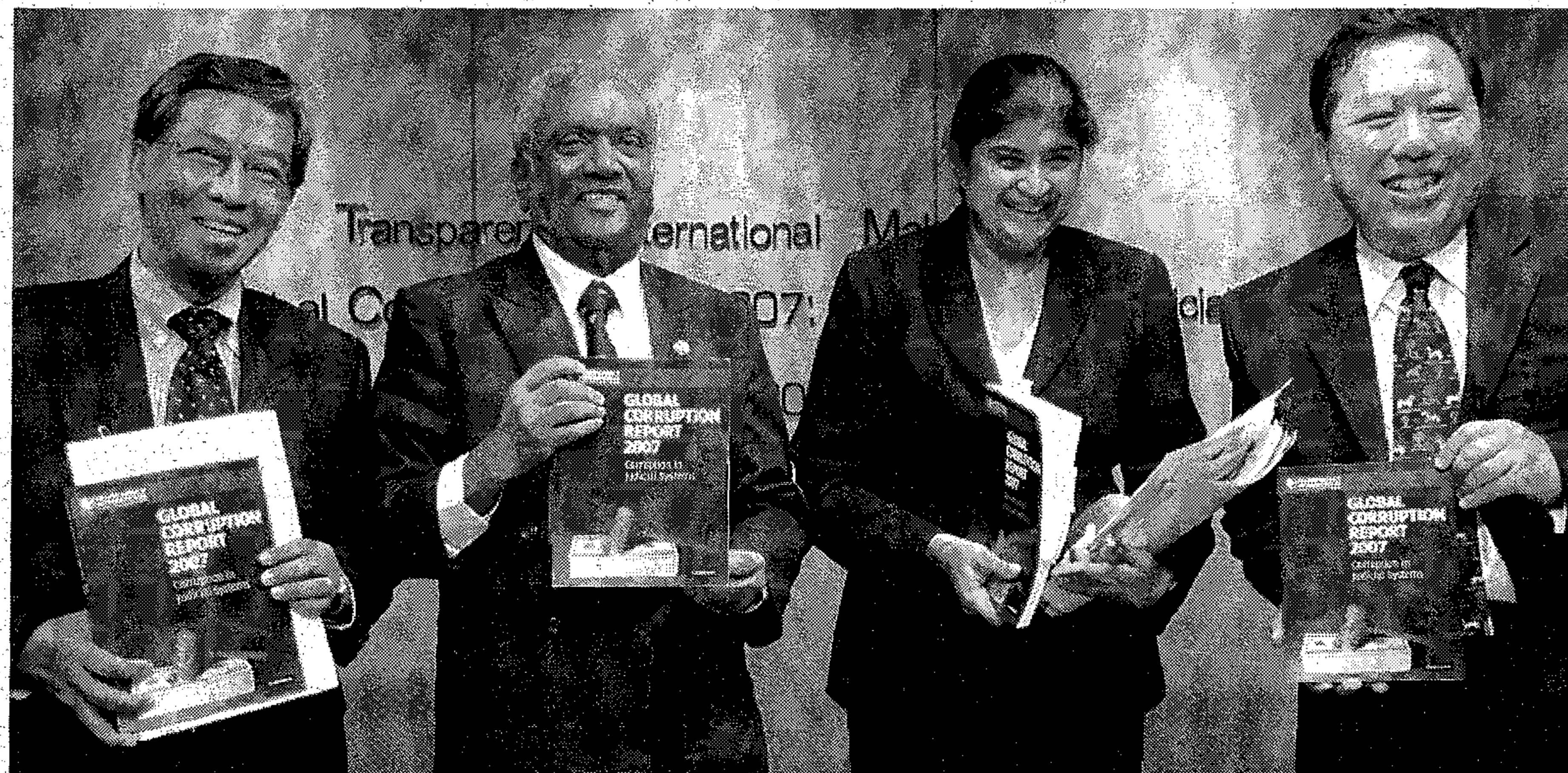
However, a panel discussing the report yesterday said that this should not be an excuse for slowing down efforts for greater transparency.

The panel was made up of TI Malaysia president Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, Malaysia Integrity Institute president Datuk Dr Mohd Tap Salleh, Bar Council chairman Ambiga Sreenevasan and the council's human rights committee deputy chairman Andrew Khoo.

"We want greater transparency and accountability in the system and so we should implement the recommendations for improving the system," said Navaratnam during a press conference with the panel.

"TI Malaysia and the Bar Council will encourage the Government to take note of the recommendations and act on them," he said, adding that 19% of those surveyed here had described Malaysia's judiciary/legal system as corrupt.

When launching the report, Navaratnam proposed that TI Malaysia and the council undertake



Graft report: (From left) Dr Mohd Tap, Navaratnam, Sreenevasan and Khoo showing copies of the 2007 Global Corruption Report yesterday.

a local survey to find out the level of faith and confidence in the judiciary and prosecution services.

"We must introduce 'Integrity Pacts' (IPs) as soon as possible in both the public and private sectors. The modules are available at TI and have proven successful," he said.

Asked for IIM's position on the establishment of a Judicial Commission for appointments and promotions, one of the report's recommendations for a corrupt-free judiciary but which has been repeatedly

opposed by the authorities, Mohd Tap said:

"The TI report will be given to the Government and since it (having a Judicial Commission) is one of the ways to improve the system, IIM will be in agreement (for having it)."

The 372-page TI report lists recommendations to promote judicial independence and accountability, encourage individual integrity, have more effective enforcement of the law and safeguard the judiciary

against political influence.

Among others, it called for judicial and prosecutorial appointments and removals to be independent of the executive and legislative branches, and for media freedom in monitoring and commenting on legal proceedings.

Of the countries above Malaysia, Denmark topped the list of less perceived corruption followed by Singapore, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg.