



# Police honour-bound to combat graft

By R.S. Kamini

A THREE-PRONGED approach has been put in place to ensure that the National Key Results Area for Corruption (Corruption NKRA) is achieved in line with the government's effort against corrupt practices.

The NKRA for Corruption aims to reestablish the people's confidence in regulatory and enforcement agencies, reduce leakages in government procurement and tackle grand corruption.

Various plans were launched under the initiative to wipe clean the sticky fingers. This includes the introduction and strengthening of compliance units.

This is one of the 26 initiatives by the NKRA Corruption Laboratory to tackle malpractice in the regulatory and enforcement agencies, as well as government procurement.

The compliance unit plays a crucial role in meeting the Corruption NKRA objectives, says Superintendent of Police Chew Tham Soon, the head of Compliance Unit under the IGP Secretariat for Disciplinary Division (Bukit Aman).

"This is to enable us to quickly prevent any opportunities for misconduct and malpractice and maintain the discipline and image of a highly respected organisation."

Currently, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), which oversees the delivery of the Corruption NKRA, is focusing efforts on working with four agencies, namely police, Customs Department, Road Transport Department (RTD) and the Immigration Department on their compliance units.

All four agencies, perceived to have the lowest integrity in the 2007 Malaysian Transparency Perception Survey, have established their own compliance unit to address any



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wrongdoing that could lead to corrupt practices.

"We have a three-pronged approach to combat corruption for enforcement agencies. We do it by strengthening the compliance unit in lead enforcement agencies, taking disciplinary action where appropriate and rewarding officers who refused bribes."

Chew said in the police force, the officers are bound by the IGSO (Inspector-General of Police Standing Order) in carrying out their duties as well

as acting in accordance with the law.

"The compliance unit conducts scheduled inspections and spot checks to ensure that each officer complies with the requirements of Law and Regulations as well as procedures that govern the respective departments."

The IGSO serves as a refined set of procedures for every given task in the police force.

"Any violation of Law and Regulations or Standing Orders will lead

to malpractice and it can be as mild as not maintaining a routine diary to any misconduct against the general orders, such as insubordination, dishonesty, lack of efficiency or industry and negligence in performing duties."

He says police's compliance unit has a duty to ensure that the Drug and Disciplinary Control System, introduced in 2006, is carried out efficiently and effectively and gives no room for malpractice within the department.

"One of our main aims is to reduce discretionary power so officers cannot act on their own without referring to their supervisors. Any exercise of discretionary power must be justified and needs to be recorded and reported for referrals."

The second approach of taking appropriate disciplinary action involves a quick check on any reports of misconduct.

He says investigations will be carried out accordingly based on the complaints received and that action will be taken against the officers involved within six months.

"We will not pick and choose. Every complaint will be dealt with accordingly."

As for rewarding honest officers, the force gives recognition to officers who refuse bribes and take action against the givers by referring them to the MACC. This is another initiative it executed under NKRA Corruption.

"To date, the inspector-general of police has given Letters of Commendation as well as cash rewards to 22 senior officers and 120 lower ranking officers for refusing to accept bribes."

"We have also been recognised by the MACC for displaying the highest level of integrity for refusing bribes and assisting the commission in exposing the offenders."

Chew says ultimately, each enforcement agency should move towards realising the goals stated in the National Integrity Plan, which aims to reduce corruption, malpractice and abuse of power, besides increasing efficiency of the public delivery system.

He adds that the duty of disciplinary control and supervision lies on every officer as enshrined under Section 3c of the Public Officers (Conduct and Discipline) Regulations (Amendment) 2002.

## Compliance units to weed out bad apples

By R.S. Kamini

SEPTICS can expect to see significant improvement in the the government's war on corruption. This year alone, major changes are being implemented, particularly the disclosure of government procurement contracts on the Treasury's MyProcurement portal, the enactment of the Whistle-blower Protection Law and move to enable trials of corruption cases to be completed within a year.

Although the National Key Result Areas on fighting corruption may take a while to show the desired results, many institutions are already registering progress, for example the cases where elected representatives (across political parties) and high-ranking civil servants who misused public funds are being prosecuted.

A civil service task force has also been set up to probe financial irregularities as reported by the Auditor-General.

In addition, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has also completed a study to plug loopholes in regulations that had allowed state assemblymen and members of parliament to misuse constituency funds.

It is also briefing elected representatives on the procedures that can help prevent abuse.

To regain the public's confidence in regulatory and enforcement agencies, the government has, for example, introduced several measures to bring to court 80 per cent of drug trafficking and possession cases.

Efforts to reduce leakages are also helping the government to recover more than its target of RM21 million in taxes from undeclared goods by year end.

In order to achieve these targets, the government is ruling out an initiative to strengthen and empower compliance units within each enforcement agency.

Other initiatives include instituting job rotation and creating a league table of per-

formance for all local authorities.

The government will also reduce leakages of funds allocated for national development and operational expenditure, and ensure transparency in the award of contracts.

Another key initiative has been the issuance of guidelines for civil servants on how to handle "support letters" which are used to exert undue influence on civil servants to circumvent standard policies and processes in obtaining contracts.

Details of bids for government tenders and tender awards have been opened for public viewing via the government's tender portal, MyProcurement, at <http://myprocurement.treasury.gov.my> since April.

The secretary-general or director-general of each ministry will be made accountable so as to ensure that the procurement information from their ministries is disclosed and updated from time to time. The details will include a list of procurement projects

planned, names of successful contractors, contract sums and project periods.

To do so, the government will enforce existing laws and conduct a study on revamping political funding to include the possibility of introducing an enhanced disclosure process.

This will hopefully allow the completion of corruption cases within a year, particularly those of public interest. Currently, courts take up an average of 3.3 years for trials and 5.2 years for appeals.

In addition, 14 Special Corruption Sessions Courts and four Special Corruption High Courts will be established to accelerate trials for corruption. Stiffer punishments are also being looked at for those guilty of corruption, which include harsher penalties for public officers who have been found guilty of misconduct amounting to corruption.

The name and shame database of convicted offenders, which is accessible to the public, will also act as a deterrent.