

AG's power may be clipped

Govt looking at Political Funding Act and new Public Prosecutor

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PUTRAJAYA: A law on political funding and separating the roles of the Attorney General and Public Prosecutor could soon be on the cards.

Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who chaired a meeting of the Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption here yesterday, said it was agreed that a Political Funding Act be put in place.

He said the Cabinet would deliberate on it before engaging with political parties.

"This law is important because we want to prevent corruption and power abuse among politicians, which is detrimental to the government's and country's image," the

Prime Minister said in a statement released after the meeting.

On separating the office of the AG and Public Prosecutor, the Prime Minister said a study must be conducted before any decision is made as it involved the Federal Constitution, legal matters and finance.

"The government remains committed to further improving governance and integrity," he added.

There have been calls to separate the powers of the AG to remove political influence from the Malaysian criminal justice system.

In 2019, the Pakatan Harapan government announced that it would table a Political Funding Bill to focus on the regulatory aspects of political contributions.

Last year, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said although there was no specific law on political funding yet, the Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Centre (GIACC) was preparing a draft.

Recently, the anti-corruption advisory board made several suggestions to the special committee on corruption, including enhancing laws to regulate political funding.

Ismail Sabri said the meeting also agreed for the National Financial Crime Centre (NFCC) to be the central agency to manage properties and possessions that were seized and forfeited.

He said it was important for the body to undertake the responsibility so that the war against financial

crime and leakages of government revenue could be prevented.

"This new policy on management involving seized and forfeited properties will allow enforcement agencies to focus more on investigation, particularly cases involving financial crimes," he said.

The Prime Minister said of the 53 legislations involved, 26 needed to be amended, and said this needed to be given priority.

The NFCC was set up in 2018 to fight money laundering activities.

Ismail Sabri also said that a national plan on good governance to be known as MyGovernance will be introduced to further strengthen the public delivery system based on the principles of transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.