

INDEPENDENT BODY TO PROBE ENFORCERS

Move will ensure greater transparency and accountability when agencies are investigated, says PM

TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
AND QISTINA SALLEHUDDIN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE government plans to establish an independent body to investigate enforcement agencies whenever an allegation or a report is lodged against them.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this would ensure greater transparency and accountability among enforcement agencies.

He said there was a need to improve the practice of enforcement agencies investigating themselves whenever complaints were lodged against their personnel.

He said that was why there had been proposals to establish an independent body like the Independent Police Conduct Commission (IPCC).

However, he said, the government wanted this to be expanded to include other enforcement agencies, like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), as well as the Immigration and Customs Departments.

“Why only the police? We also need to have an independent agency similar to IPCC to investigate other enforcement agencies.

“That is why we have asked the Attorney-General’s Chambers to review this and ensure that they (enforcement agencies) don’t investigate themselves,” he said when responding to a question by Gobind Singh Deo (PH-Puchong).

Gobind, in a supplementary question, asked the prime minister, who is the Tambun member of parliament, if the government had any mechanism to address allegations of corruption involving high-ranking officers from enforcement agencies like MACC.

It was previously reported that the IPCC would be in force starting July 1.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says the Attorney-General’s Chambers will review and ensure enforcement agencies don’t investigate themselves. BERNAMA PIC

In a parliamentary written reply, the Home Ministry said it was awaiting approval for staffing and allocation for the establishment of the commission.

This was in response to a question by DAP’s Kepong MP Lim Lip Eng on the status of the establishment of the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC).

It has been almost two decades since a Royal Commission of Inquiry recommended the establishment of the IPCMC.

The closest it came to fruition was when the Pakatan Harapan government tabled the IPCMC Bill in 2019. The Bill, however, received criticism and it was sent for a review by a Parliamentary Select Committee.

The IPCMC Bill was later replaced with the IPCC Bill when Perikatan Nasional assumed power.

To another question, Anwar said he was open to any investigation into the political funding received by or given to PKR.

He acknowledged that there was a need for a comprehensive legislation on political funding.

Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Law and Constitutional Reforms) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said told the *New Straits Times* that the “new” independent body mentioned by Anwar was actually an enhancement of the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC).

She said the Legal Affairs Division would set up a pro tem committee to review how EAIC’s

powers could be enhanced.

“The pro tem committee will study how the EAIC can be revamped for maximum efficiency, how to enforce the existing powers of the EAIC, and how the set up of new agencies can further enhance the commission,” she said.

For now, said Azalina, any concern and complaint on maladministration by enforcement agencies will be handled by EAIC.

“As a non-prosecutorial body, EAIC serves to ensure the accountability and integrity of all Malaysian enforcement institutions.”

However, it was unclear if the EAIC would be given prosecutorial powers in its enhanced version.

Azalina said an ombudsman agency would also be set up to deal with complaints against other civil servants. She said the framework for the ombudsman agency was being drawn up.

“The agency will address concerns and complaints from the public with regard to maladministration, presently handled by the Public Complaints Bureau.”

On March 7, Azalina said the government was considering several new measures to expedite the Ombudsman Malaysia Act to enhance integrity and governance in addressing public complaints.

This includes introducing a new investigative body under Ombudsman Malaysia to provide an annual report to Parliament.