

Survey: 52pc of Malaysians trust government
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 31 — Just over half the Malaysian public trusts the government, with only about a quarter crediting the administration with effectively managing the country's finances and for transparency and openness, according to a survey by one of the world's largest public relations firms.

Edelman's 2012 Trust Barometer findings released today found that while 52 per cent of 1,000 respondents polled trusted the government, only 35 per cent consider government officials and regulators to be credible.

But Edelman Asia-Pacific chief executive David Brain said at the launch event that despite statistics "looking dreadful... Malaysia still ranks ninth among 25 countries for trust in government."

According to the online survey, the average level of trust in governments globally was 38 per cent.

The survey, which ran from October 10 to November 30 last year, also found that "informed publics" (200 respondents in the top 25 per cent earners with degrees and high consumption of media) in Malaysia were less trusting of the government.

Within this segment, only 49 per cent believed the government and 32 per cent said government officials were credible.

The study also found that while over 70 per cent of those surveyed said effectively managing the country's finances and being transparent and open were important to building trust in the government, only a quarter said the government had performed well in these areas.

Across the 25 countries polled, 65 per cent believed financial stewardship was crucial to building trust in the government while two in three said transparency was vital. Just 19 per cent of the financial stewardship proponents felt the government was doing a good job while only 16 per cent saw the administration as transparent.

"The image of not being able to manage finances is a recent development. Some of our ministers don't understand development economics," said Datuk Mohd Ghazali Md Noor of business consultants Tindakan Strategi, one of the panel speakers, at the launch.

The survey took place just as the Auditor-General's Report for 2010 was released on October 24, outlining millions in mismanaged government funds.

One of the cases highlighted in the report, the RM250 million National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project awarded to the family of senior minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, has also been hit with repeated allegations of abuse of power and graft.

The survey also found that 58 per cent of Malaysians trust NGOs and businesses, while only 46 per cent had faith in the media.

Globally, the 12th annual Trust Barometer found that 50 per cent of the public trusted NGOs, 47 per cent had confidence in businesses and only 46 per cent trusted the media.

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