

Govt mulls act to curb corrupt political funding conduct

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PUTRAJAYA, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- The government will look into introducing a new act to curb corrupt conduct in political funding, Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today.

He said political parties require funding to operate as the cost of political activities is getting higher.

"This is a very big problem where political parties need funding because without funding, they can't function," he said at a press conference after launching the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) 2019-2023 here.

The NACP has 115 initiatives covering six priority areas: politics, public procurement, law enforcement, public sector administration, legislation and the judiciary, as well as corporate governance.

"Now we must have a source of funding, and it must be legal, as well as recognised by the government.

"So the government is looking at how funding should not be seen as a bribe to the party or government. It is a very difficult process, but we will find way out," Dr Mahathir said.

Asked how confident the government is in implementing the NACP, Dr Mahathir said: "At the moment, the reports say that corruption is not happening as often or much as before. But most of the reports were from what happened before, and not now. Apparently, people are less prone to corruption now.

To a question on Pakatan Harapan's loss in the Cameron Highlands by-election recently, Dr Mahathir, who is Pakatan Harapan chairman, said: "There seems to be some evidence that money was used by some parties to gain support. That is corruption."

Meanwhile, Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Centre (GIACC) director-general, Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed, said talks with all political parties on political funding management are entering the final stage.

"We have discussed it with the Attorney-General and time is being provided to respond to everything we raised.

"When we get the feedback, and if it's positive, we will proceed with the draft legislation to be brought to Parliament via Cabinet," Abu Kassim said.

Asked for his thoughts on the appointment of people in the political circle filling positions in government agencies and government-linked companies, he said there was nothing wrong if the individual was judged on merit and qualification.

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