

Indonesia anti-graft agency to play key role - Boediono

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Indonesian vice president-designate Boediono on Tuesday said the anti-graft agency, which has come under attack in recent months, would continue to play a key role in the government's fight against corruption.

The Corruption Eradication Commission, known by its Indonesian acronym KPK, has investigated scores of officials and, together with an effective Corruption Court, has been at the forefront of Indonesia's efforts to tackle graft in order to attract more investment.

But in recent months, the KPK and Corruption Court have both come under threat, putting Indonesia's anti-corruption campaign at risk.

"We still need an effective KPK," Boediono, a former central bank governor who is regarded as a clean and capable technocrat, told a seminar in Singapore, when asked what the government would do to ensure the KPK's effectiveness.

"The anti-corruption drive will continue and KPK will play an important role," he said, adding that it would be the government's "partner in improving governance and reforming our bureaucracy."

Politicians are among those with most to fear from the KPK and the corruption court, and in recent months, some politicians have tried to weaken both the KPK and the court.

Their proposals include meddling with the panels of judges in the corruption court, potentially making them less effective. In addition, parliament has stalled when it comes to passing key legislation that would extend the corruption court's lifespan.

Parliament and legislature topped the league tables for corruption in Indonesia, ahead of political parties, police and customs, according to Transparency International's 2008 Bribe Payers Survey.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was elected in 2004 on promises to fight graft and was re-elected this month partly thanks to the progress he has made so far in tackling corruption.

Earlier this year, the head of the KPK was detained by police as a murder suspect, sparking fears about the future of the agency.

Boediono said on Tuesday that the government would need to take the initiative in filling the vacant top post at the agency.

Indonesia's Boediono sees 2009 GDP growth of 4 pct

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Indonesian Vice President designate Boediono said on Tuesday that the country's economic growth would be around 4 percent this year and the rupiah currency would continue to gain ground.

"Indonesia's rupiah has been relatively stable and tends to appreciate," he said in a speech in Singapore.

Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said last week she was confident of achieving economic growth of 4-4.5 percent this year despite the recent bomb attacks on two luxury hotels in Jakarta.