CIVIL SERVICE

SERVING MALAYSIANS ALTRUISTICALLY

Transforming the public sector requires us to interact and react in parallel with others



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FOR more than half a century, the Malaysian public sector has gone through an incredible transformative process and stands among one of the best in this region.

The policies and strategies were shaped and refined according to the changing times and demands of the people so that services rendered are fulfilling and up to mark.

All this was made possible by having a visionary and people-centric leader, who ensures that our civil servants serve in the best interests of Malaysians.

Lately, however, many in our society have expressed their concerns and have different perspectives on the Malaysian civil service. Some are placing high regard and recognised the contributions and sacrifices made by civil servants. A fraction of them interpreted reversely and portrayed a distorted form of civil service on various platforms.

One has to realise that the dynamism of the world and speed of globalisation dictates that we can no longer function in isolation, but rather interact and react in parallel with others. For this, the government of the day needs to ensure adequate allocations each year for its machinery to ensure that the people's benefits are not compromised.

One clear example is our present battle against the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of stimulus packages were injected at various segments of society for socioeconomic sustainability. Benefits also extended to the frontliners, who sacrificed and risked their lives to safeguard our people.

In this context, for the public sector to serve efficiently, it segmentises its services into many categories covering teaching profession, uniform bodies, security forces and health sector that take up two thirds of the 1.6 million total employees.

Only the remainder directly serve the federal and state departments with the ratio of 1:20 of public servants with total population. Therefore, the argument that we are bloated or overstaffed is not true.

An organisation that employs a huge labour force irrespective of whether in developed or developing countries, private or public sector, will not be totally free of any form of criminal involvement by their employees. As we are dealing with humans, their tendencies in committing wrongdoings are unavoidable.

Taking cognisance of this fact, the present leadership of the public sector helmed by both the Chief Secretary to the Government and Public Service Department director-general are spearheading a host of affirmative measures to ensure that civil servants invariably demonstrate a high level of civility and professionalism.

One such instrument is the General Order that binds and drives the civil servants. Further, legal documents like the Whistleblower Protection Act gives protection to informants. Graft busters are also given sufficient power to act on free will without fear or favour as we have seen in the string of cases lately.

The message is vivid that civil servants cannot escape the long arm of the law. The improvements are indicated in the 2019 Corruption Perception Index where we galloped to rank 51 from 61 in 2018 out of 180 countries.

In another spectrum, the government opens up more opportunities for the younger generation from various backgrounds and ethnicities to join the public sector and contribute their expertise to enliven this sector.

The expansion of digitalisation effort at almost every level of the government sector is proven testimony that the public sector is in alert mode and heading towards betterment.

In one way or another, the present pandemic has broken the shackles and comfort zones of our civil servants. Many things have been altered. Even the conduct of certain non-essential services are delivered through the work-from-home mechanism in order to provide a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

Issues of integrity, corruption and any form of wrongdoings are the daily mantras and repeated time and again to all civil servants from various directives and orders. The Public Service Department director-general is stern and constantly monitors this matter.

Essentially, the ongoing transformative effort undertaken by the Malaysian public sector is to serve the public at large altruistically, effectively and to enhance a good image globally.

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