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Don't be rude, government officials told

Chow Kum Hor

MALACCA, Thurs. - Government officials, especially those who deal with the public, were today urged not to be rude but courteous to improve the image of the civil service.

Bandar Hilir State Assemblyman Sim Tong Him said patience and professionalism were vital elements that could help upgrade the image of the sector that consist of an 800,000-strong workforce.

"In addition, civil servants must also be prepared to listen to the grouses and problems of the public," he said at his office in Taman Kota Laksamana today.

Sim expressed regret regarding the rudeness of a Road Transport Department official whom he claimed not only intimidated a taxi driver but also showed disrespect for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Relating the incident, he said Sau Soon Chye, 31, fetched a passenger from the Terendak Military camp in Sungai Udang, near here, to a shopping complex in Jalan Tun Mamat on April 22 at 11am.

Sau, also present, said the passenger had earlier asked to be dropped off along Jalan Tun Mamat, a no-stopping area, to which the former complied.

"It took only a few seconds for me to drop the passenger but as I was about to leave, a RTD vehicle stopped in front of my taxi," he said.

Sau said several RTD enforcement officers later approached him and issued him with a compound, although he tried to explain to them that it was his customer's request to stop at the spot.

According to Sau, upon explaining that he was only fulfilling his customer's request, one of the officers allegedly said:

"If I give you RM1 million to kill (Dr) Mahathir, will you do that?"

"I then told the officer, identified as Adam Derusman, not to be rude as I will lodge a police report.

"To this, he said he was not afraid. Instead, he challenged me to do so."

Sau lodged a report at the Melaka Tengah police station at 12.20pm on the same day.

He added that he would write to Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik about the matter.

The taxi driver, with eight years' experience, said it was the officer's rudeness and disrespect for the Prime Minister that upset him most.

"Furthermore, I only dropped off my passenger there for just a few seconds," he said, adding that he would not pay the RM300 compound but would appeal in court.

When contacted, a State RTD official refused to comment but said the matter must be referred to the RTD headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

An official with the RTD headquarters said the department director-general was away on his pilgrimage while his deputy was not available.

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