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## Change in attitude needed for people-friendly style

Lee Lam Thye

THE decision by the Home Ministry to make itself people-friendly is laudable.

Its success will depend on the leadership of the Ministry, the commitment of its officers and staff and its preparedness to accept ideas and suggestions from the public as to how the Ministry, its departments and agencies can be made people-friendly.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should be complimented for recognising there are weaknesses in the Ministry leading to their decision to make it people-friendly. This decision has been well received by the public.

But what the people hope is that the Government's aspiration will be translated into action with positive improvements and not remain as an unfulfilled promise.

It is, therefore, essential for the Ministry to take steps to show its preparedness and commitment to change.

The first move has been initiated with the organisation of a forum recently at the Home Ministry where guests from outside the Ministry were invited to speak on how the Ministry can be people-friendly and helpful to the public.

Such feedback and input to improve service should be considered for implementation.

Criticisms of the Ministry should be accepted with an open mind, and constructive input must be considered for adoption.

Forums and dialogues should be organised on a regular basis to enable guests from non-governmental organisations, voluntary bodies and organisations as well as eminent persons to share ideas and suggestions on ways to make the Ministry and its departments people-friendly, helpful and caring.

Police stations at district levels can help promote public relations with community leaders through events such as festive celebrations.

In any move to make the Ministry people-friendly, there must be attitudinal changes among all levels of manpower in the organisation.

One way of measuring public perceptions of the performance of a Ministry is using the number of public complaints as an indicator.

In the last three years, according to figures of the Public Complaints Bureau, the Home Ministry and its departments have received the most complaints.

Although the front-line agencies of the Ministry have improved their services, there is still a lot of room for improvement.

The departments and agencies must endeavour to deliver their services in line with their respective client's charter.

I strongly recommend that departments and agencies review their client's charter annually to ensure their targets are realistic, attainable and measurable.

The setting of service targets in the delivery of public service and making it customer-friendly and customer-driven is important.

Service targets must not only be aimed at satisfying the public but also be benchmarked against the best practices with the same type of services in the global environment.

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