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Don't fret over retirement date

L.T. Wong

THE issue of extending the mandatory retirement age from 55 to 56 in the public sector has stirred up unprecedented and heated debate from all quarters.

Every day, each trivial announcement or news pertaining to it is followed with utmost excitement.

Even the proposed date, Oct 1, 2001, for effective implementation of this new ruling, is cause for dispute.

Many have queried why this date was chosen. There were quite a few theories about that too.

After listening to all this, I conclude that many people make a mountain out of a molehill while others who are prudent amicably call for options. Well, it is not a big deal in terms of monetary gain or, most importantly, career advancement, since a one-year extension makes only a marginal difference.

The fundamental predicament has already been clarified by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad some time ago. The reason is only an interpretation of "upon reaching 55 years old".

That is, do you call it a day you reach your 55th birthday or upon completion of 55 years, meaning you reach your 56th birthday?

If one opts to stay on another year, one gets another 12 months to serve the public but at the end of that one still has to leave government service for good.

The fact is that existing legislation dictates that in life everyone has to face the fact that when the time arrives we have outlived our usefulness!

To put it in a nutshell, serving government officers should only cherish the days when they are still active in the public sector, without having to make a great fuss about the proposed new retirement date which is indeed an insignificant matter.

Don't be unduly exasperated or even cry wolf. It is no use crying over spilt milk.

So it is of great urgency that they should devote their efforts to serving the public with undivided integrity and unparalleled dynamism at all times. It is indeed futile to regret when one's time is up. There can be no help for it.