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Online learning model

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SOME 950,000 Government staff stand to be better evaluated and awarded through the new Malaysian Remuneration Scheme (MRS) which has been unveiled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The system, which is expected to stress on rewarding civil servants based on competency and depth of knowledge instead of the current practice of yearly performance evaluation report, will require them to attend courses and sit for examinations.

Administration of the exam will be conducted by the Public Examination Board under the Public Services Department (PSD). Meanwhile, bigger ministries will have their own exam syndicates. To ensure the management of the system is transparent, the appraisal system would be monitored by a human resources development panel.

While the intention of the new scheme is to spur Government employees to work harder and enhance productivity, it would be wise for those implementing the system to look into various aspects as well as possible issues.

For one, the sheer number of employees will pose quite a problem in formulating and designing the courses to be attended prior to the examination. This is especially so when there are various types of knowledge and competencies among the staff.

The other issue is the delivery of the courses which, due to the number of staff, will give rise to access and scheduling problems. The logistics problems will surely surface when it comes to the time for the exam to be conducted. Beyond that there will be evaluation issues involving the number of examiners and number crunchers needed to compile the results within a specific period of time.

This is where information and communications technology (ICT) can come in to play a role. The authorities concerned could perhaps look into the online learning model and online assessment method to ease the process of evaluation.

Through shared databases and systems, which could perhaps be integrated into the electronic government initiative, the various ministries and agencies could save on resources, time and money.

The important thing here is to ensure that MRS when implemented will be efficient and transparent. If not, there will be more frustrated employees in the civil service, which would put a damper on the Government's efforts to provide efficient delivery of its services.