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Errant department heads blamed for poor delivery system

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Public sector union leaders blamed errant government department heads for inefficiency in the government's delivery system.

They said it was the department heads who were responsible for the work ethics of their departments and if they failed to set the right example, the whole department would be affected.

However, some said it was not fair to blame the entire civil service.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said the Government should come down hard on heads of department who did not perform, as their attitude and actions reflected badly on the civil service.

"They are the ones who should be leading by example, but some don't realise that they are being paid by the taxpayers. If they fail to perform, they should leave or be replaced by someone else.

"The union will assist the Government in identifying errant department heads. Our members will highlight lazy department heads through the media."

Yesterday, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz blamed civil servants for problems in the public sector's delivery system, saying the problem was not with the system, but the human resources which managed it.

Amalgated National Union of Local Authorities Employees president Abdul Rahim Mahad agreed with Siva Subramaniam, saying that many department heads had failed to practise Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's "leadership by example" doctrine.

"Most of the problems associated with the civil service such as laziness and corruption are related to the top management.

"Civil servants at the lower levels are obedient. They follow the instructions and the lead of their heads.

"If the heads are hands-on and hard-working, then the whole department would inherit that culture."

Rahim said many civil servants, especially at the local authority level, had not been given appropriate training due to lack of facilities.

Government Stock Keepers Union president Harun Zakaria said it was not fair to blame the whole civil service for the actions of a few, but added that it was the latter which gave the whole service a bad name.

"It is a question of integrity. The union has always stressed the importance of integrity and the importance of abiding by government regulations."