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Excellence: More needs to be done by civil servants

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IN his frank remarks about the Malaysian civil service made recently at the opening of the National Institute of Public Administration Management Technology Centre (Imatec), Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad paid tribute to civil servants for their contributions to national development, but regretted there was still "a certain degree of corruption" among some civil servants although it was minimal.

The Prime Minister added that civil servants must strive to be more efficient and resist corruption as his nature is never to be satisfied with anything.

He is always keen on wanting to upgrade performance and efficiency.

I have often expressed my views about our civil service and the need for it to strive for excellence.

It is my firm belief that an efficient and transparent civil service is the backbone of a good and responsible Government.

Malaysia is indeed fortunate in having a generally good civil service which has contributed in no small measure to the country's remarkable development since independence.

However, like all organisations, there are shortcomings which need to be rectified if it is to be efficient, effective and transparent at all times.

For example, despite efforts made to improve the front-line service counters of all departments and agencies, there are still public complaints.

The recent statement by the Chief Secretary to the Government that civil servants should not give preferential treatment to influential persons, businessmen or close associates has been generally welcomed by the public.

As professionals committed to public service, all civil servants must serve everyone fairly and justly, irrespective of his or her status in society.

The public generally recognises that our civil service has served the country well in contributing towards national development and improving the quality of life.

However, there is much more that could be accomplished by civil servants to achieve excellence.

They must continuously re-engineer and re-invent themselves with the focus on giving the best service to the public.

While we expect our civil servants to perform better, they should also be fairly remunerated according to the Government's capacity.

Good moral values are essential if we are to have a clean, efficient and trustworthy administration.

Civil servants must develop a culture which will help pave the way for the emergence of not only a dedicated, efficient and effective civil service but also one which gives emphasis to management integrity.

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to have a work culture which incorporates discipline, ethics, responsibility and transparency.

Efforts should continuously be made to instil integrity and ethical values.

Public administrators and civil servants must discharge their duties with integrity and honesty besides being ethical and transparent.

The inculcation of noble and ethical values accompanied by adherence to the oath of good governance is the most effective way to fight corrupt

practices in the civil service.

Ethics are not only important to the civil service but also to all sectors of Malaysian society.

At the end of the day, making honesty and integrity a way of life and developing an anti-graft culture is the answer to fighting corruption.